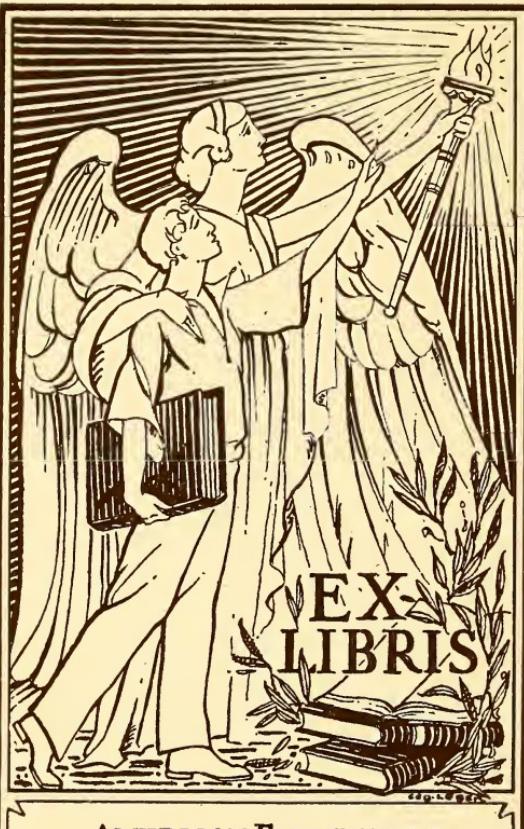


NORA'S TWIN SISTER



NINA RHOADES



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BOSTON



"BUT YOU'RE LIKE SOMEBODY I KNOW; YOU'RE JUST LIKE ME."
Page 49.

NORA'S TWIN SISTER

BY
NINA RHOADES

ILLUSTRATED BY
NANA FRENCH BICKFORD



BOSTON
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Nora's Twin Sister

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NORA'S TWIN SISTER

CHAPTER I

NORA ENTERTAINS THE JUDSONS

“ **A**ND Tommy began to run, and he ran and ran till he came to the top of the kitchen stairs, and then he tripped, and went bump, bump, all the way down to the bottom. And then he gave an awful scream, and sat up, and where do you think he found himself? Right in his own bed, with his mother leaning over him, saying, ‘Why, Tommy darling, whatever is the matter? You must have had a bad dream.’ And Tommy put his hand up to his mouth, and there wasn’t any orange-tree growing out of it at all. It was all just a dream, but he had such a dreadful scare, he never, never swallowed another orange-pit as long as he lived.”

Nora paused, being rather out of breath, and her audience gave a long sigh of relief.

“ It’s very funny,” remarked May, reflectively. “ You’ve told us that story a good many times,

and we know just how it's going to end, but every time you come to the part where the doctor pulls out his long knife, and says, 'We shall have to cut Tommy open,' I always have chills down my back."

Nora smiled with the pardonable pride of the accomplished story-teller.

"I get rather excited at that part myself," she admitted, "though of course it's very silly, because I made it all up. Put your arms under the bedclothes, Jimmy, or you'll take cold and send the rash in."

"Well, suppose I do, it won't make any difference, and if the rash goes in perhaps I won't feel so uncomfortable," argued Jimmy, who always objected to prompt obedience.

"You'd die," stated his sister, calmly. "People always die when the rash goes in."

"Shucks!" retorted Jimmy, but he took the precaution to draw the bedclothes up over his arms once more, nevertheless. The prospect of dying was not an agreeable one. His sister May was ten, and he was only eight and a half, and it was natural to suppose that a person nearly two years his senior might know more on certain subjects, even if that person did happen to be a girl.

"It's great to have you come and tell us stories when Papa and Mamma are out," observed May, politely. "Wasn't it lucky you caught the mea-

sles first! If you had been sick at the same time with us, Mamma says she doesn't know what in the world she would have done. You do make up such good stories, Nora. I don't see how you ever think of them all."

"Mother says I get my imagination from my father," said Nora. "He was a great Irish actor, you know, and he wrote plays and poems, too, only no publisher would ever take them, because they were too good to suit the public."

"I'm sure you could act if you tried," said May. "Why, when you're telling a story, and change your voice to talk like the different people in it, I can almost see the things happening. Papa says he thinks it's a shame your mamma won't let you come out in vaudeville."

Nora sighed, and shook her curly head.

"I've coaxed and coaxed," she said, regretfully, "but it isn't any use. Mother says I may be a writer when I grow up, but she won't let me act."

"Well, it's too bad," agreed May. "Papa and Mamma are doing real well at The Palace; their pictures are going to be in next *Sunday Herald*. They've got a new sketch, and it's taking wonderfully. I wish Jimmy and I could go on, but Mamma says we haven't either of us got a particle of talent. I should think your mamma would like to have you make all the money you could."

"Mother says money isn't the only thing in the

world," said Nora, soberly. "She wants me to have a good education before I do anything else. You see my father had a wonderful education. He went to Oxford University in England, and graduated first in his class. Mother had a good education, too. She speaks French, and she used to play the piano beautifully, but it's so long since we've been able to afford to have one she's afraid she's forgotten most of her music. My grandfather was a lawyer, and when Mother was a little girl they were very well off, but when Grandpa died there wasn't much money left, and Mother had to be companion to a cross old lady till she met Father and they got married. Father always thought he was going to be very rich, but he wasn't strong, and the managers wouldn't put on his plays, and then he was very ill, and died, when I was a baby, and Mother has had to work hard ever since."

Here the conversation was interrupted by a demand from the feverish Jimmy for a drink of water, and Nora departed for the kitchen sink, whence she returned with a glass of cold water, which she held tenderly to the little sufferer's lips. Jimmy had come down with measles several days later than his sister, and was still in the uncomfortable, feverish stage of the disease.

"Tell us another story," commanded Jimmy, when he had drunk his fill, and Nora had tucked

the bedclothes about him again, and turned his hot pillow.

"All right," said Nora, cheerfully, setting the empty glass down on the floor, the little dark apartment-house bedroom being destitute of all furniture except one chair and the two small iron bedsteads. "What story shall I tell?"

"About your twin sister," said May, eagerly. "You love that story, don't you, Jimmy?"

"I like 'The Talking Tree' better," objected Jimmy.

"Oh, that's just a fairy story. Please let Nora tell about her twin sister; it's so interesting."

Jimmy was beginning to feel rather sleepy or he might not have acquiesced so readily, but as it was, he made no further objection, and May added an impatient, "Go on, Nora."

But to her surprise, good-natured Nora did not respond with her usual alacrity. Her dark little face had grown suddenly grave and troubled.

"I don't believe I'd better tell that story any more," she said, doubtfully. "I should think you'd be tired of it, anyhow."

"But we're not a bit tired of it," protested May. "It's the most interesting story you tell. Besides, you always add new parts to it. Oh, please do go on, Nora; I heard the clock strike five, and Papa and Mamma will be in before you finish if you don't hurry."

"But don't you think it's a rather silly story?" urged Nora. "Let me tell 'The Talking Tree' instead; Jimmy likes that best."

"Jimmy doesn't care; he's going to sleep. Oh, please do hurry and begin, Nora."

Thus urged, Nora choked down her scruples, and began.

"Well, my twin sister lives in a beautiful big house, over on Fifth Avenue, opposite the park. It's one of the grandest houses you ever saw. There are two men in livery, and sometimes one opens the front door, and sometimes the other. My twin sister has a big automobile of her very own, and every afternoon she goes for a ride. Some days her governess goes with her, and other days she takes her friends. Almost every Saturday she goes to the theatre. She has closets full of beautiful dresses, and when she was little she had the most wonderful toys you ever heard of. Her doll's house had electric lights, and hot and cold water in it. She's given all her toys away now, but she's got books, shelves and shelves full of them, and the loveliest jewelry: pins, and rings, and bracelets. You ought to see her when she goes out walking with her father on Sunday afternoons. She's so pretty you would just love to kiss her."

"She looks just like you, doesn't she?" remarked May, innocently.

Nora blushed.

"I didn't mean her face was so pretty," she explained, modestly ; "it's her clothes. She has a velvet suit, trimmed with chinchilla, and a muff to match, and the prettiest hat you ever saw. Then her curls hang loose over her shoulders, and—and—well, I can't explain it exactly, but she really is lovely."

"I think you might be quite lovely, too, if you were dressed like that," said May, reflectively. "But your twin sister's face is just exactly like yours, even if her clothes aren't; at least you always say it is."

"Oh, yes," said Nora ; "if we were dressed alike I don't believe any one could tell which was which."

"Tell us about the party," said May, settling herself more comfortably ; "you've only told us that part once."

"Oh, the party was on her birthday, when she was twelve. Of course that was my birthday, too, but I didn't have any party. It was the grandest party you ever heard of. The street was lined with carriages and automobiles, and there was an awning, and a carpet on the front steps. There were hundreds of children at the party, and real musicians played for them to dance, and a man did wonderful tricks, and a lady sang and told beautiful fairy stories."

"Was there ice-cream?" This in a sleepy voice from Jimmy.

"Of course there was, quarts and quarts, and there were cakes and candies, and all sorts of delicious things besides. Sherry served the refreshments. There was a long account of the party in the *Sunday Herald*."

"I wish I had some ice-cream now," moaned Jimmy; "I'm awful hot and thirsty."

"Maybe your mother will bring some when she comes in," suggested Nora, hopefully. "My twin sister has so much ice-cream that she doesn't care any more about it than we care about hash. She's very generous, though. Once she went to a Home for crippled children, and brought them all candy, and when she went away, she ordered ice-cream and cake to be sent to them every Sunday. That was in the *Herald*, too. A great many things my twin sister does are in the newspapers. It's because her father is so very rich that people are always interested in what his family do. His wife is dead, and he and my twin sister live in that big house all alone except for a lot of servants, and a housekeeper. My sister doesn't go to school, but she has ever so many teachers, who come every day to give her lessons."

"I should hate that," declared May, with conviction. "I suppose she has to learn to speak French, and play the piano. It must be grand to

live in that big house, though, and ride in an auto every day. Go on and make up some more, Nora. You make it sound so real I keep forgetting it isn't all true."

But before Nora could "make up any more," the outer door of the apartment was heard to open and close, and a cheery voice called —

"Here I am, kids; did you think I was never coming?"

"It's Mamma," announced May, joyfully, and Jimmy opened his heavy eyes, to inquire —

"Oh, Mamma, did you bring ice-cream?"

"Ice-cream! Well, now, what ever made you think of that?" inquired Mrs. Judson, appearing in the doorway, her plump, good-humored face wreathed in smiles.

"I bet you did!" cried Jimmy, his own face brightening perceptibly at sight of his mother.
"Oh, say, Mamma, did you?"

"To be sure I did," said Mrs. Judson; "that's just what kept me so long. I'd have been home ten minutes sooner if I hadn't stopped at the confectioner's. Why, Jimmy, my poor little chick, you're as red as a lobster. No doubt about yours being a thorough case. I hope they've both been good while I was away, Nora?"

"They've been as good as gold," declared Nora.
"I've been telling stories all the afternoon. I gave them their medicine at three, as you told me to."

"You're a jewel," declared Mrs. Judson. "I don't believe there are many children of your age who could be trusted as you can. Now you must just stay and have some ice-cream ; there's plenty for everybody."

Nora accepted the invitation with pleasure, and followed Mrs. Judson to the kitchen, in quest of saucers and spoons. In theatrical circles Mrs. Judson was known as Mrs. Leroy Newcomb, and her husband, Mr. Judson, appeared on the vaudeville programmes as Mr. Leroy Newcomb. In earlier life Mr. Judson had been greatly admired for his graceful dancing, but flesh and advancing years had seriously interfered with his career as a dancer, and at the present time he and Mrs. Judson eked out a rather scanty income as "vaudeville artists."

"Nora's been telling us such an interesting story," said May, as the party settled down to the enjoyment of ice-cream and lady-fingers. "It's about her twin sister, who's awfully rich, and lives in a big house over on Fifth Avenue, opposite the park. Tell Mamma about it, Nora ; it's lovely."

"Yes, do, dear," urged good-natured Mrs. Judson, but Nora blushed and shook her head.

"I've got to go," she said ; "Mother told me to come home as soon as you got back."

"Finish your cream first," advised Mrs. Judson, "and don't hurry. You've been a great help, and

I wish you'd tell your mother how much obliged to her I am for letting you stay with the children. That Jimmy of mine is such a limb, he'd never keep inside the bedclothes for five minutes if there wasn't somebody to watch him. It isn't so bad in the evening, when they're both asleep, and the janitor's wife looks in once in a while to see that everything's all right, but if it wasn't for you I'm sure I don't know how I should ever manage in the afternoons now they're both in bed at once. I wish your mother'd let me pay you something, but when I suggested it to her the other day, she seemed quite upset at the very idea."

"Of course Mother wouldn't let you pay me," said Nora, blushing. "I love taking care of people, and I'd rather tell stories than do almost anything else. I hope May will be up by Monday, though, for Mother thinks I will have to go back to school. The measles quarantine is only two weeks, and I've been out since Wednesday."

"Well, I suppose you'll have to go, then," said Mrs. Judson, with a sigh, "though how I'm going to get along without you I don't see. Your mother's very strong on education, isn't she?"

"Yes," said Nora, regretfully; "she wants me to be able to teach when I leave school."

"I know she does, and it seems a pity, too. Why, with your talent for acting, you might be bringing in a good salary by the time you're six-

teen. But, there, what's the use of talking? Your mother has her views, and she's a lady, if there ever was one. Must you really go? You've left 'most a whole spoonful of cream on your plate. That's right, scrape around the edges. I was brought up never to waste anything, and it's a good rule, too."

Nora laughed, as she put down her empty saucer, and having bidden the Judsons a hasty farewell, she hurried away up to her own quarters, in the big studio at the top of the apartment house. There was no elevator, but Nora was accustomed to stairs, and ran lightly up the three long flights, and opened the door of the studio, which served her mother and herself as parlor, kitchen and bedroom all in one.

Before one of the windows, a delicate little woman, who looked almost too young and pretty to be the mother of such a big girl, was busy with a typewriter, her nimble fingers flying over the keys with a speed which would have surprised any one less accustomed to it than Nora. At the little girl's entrance, Mrs. O'Neil looked up from her work with a smile.

"Most finished, Mummy?"

"In a few minutes, chicken. Don't bother. The boy from the office is to call at six, and it's long past five already. I'm in a great hurry."

"All right," promised Nora, "I won't say a

word, and I'll be as quiet as a mouse. I'll just read the newspaper till you're through." And suiting the action to the words, she picked up the morning paper and settled herself in the rocker by the opposite window, to catch the last rays of afternoon sunshine.

For the next fifteen minutes the only sounds in the room were the steady click of the typewriter, and an occasional rustle from Nora's paper. Then Mrs. O'Neil finished her last sheet, and began gathering her manuscript together. Nora was on her feet in a moment.

"The paper says fair and warmer for tomorrow," she announced. "Don't you hope it'll come true? Just think, it's three whole weeks since we've been to the park. First it rained one Sunday, and then came the horrid old measles. Let me help you tie them up, Mother. Is the story as good as the one last week?"

"I am afraid not," said Mrs. O'Neil. "This tiresome cold has given me such a headache that my brain is duller than usual. I sat here for nearly an hour before I could think of an opening sentence for my article."

"Poor Mummy! Well, it's finished now, at any rate, and I'm sure it's all right. I know people must just love reading your things. I wish I were grown up, so I could write for the newspapers, too."

"You will probably write better than I do," said her mother; "you inherit your father's talent."

Nora blushed with pleasure.

"I've been telling the Judsons stories all the afternoon," she said. "I made up two new ones, and then I told 'Tommy and The Orange Pits,' and just before Mrs. Judson came in, they wanted me to tell about 'Her.' "

Mrs. O'Neil looked a little troubled.

"You really must be careful, Nora," she said, gravely. "Suppose the Judsons, or some one else, were to find out?"

"Oh, they won't; they couldn't possibly!" declared Nora. "I never talk about her to anybody but Jimmy and May, and they think I make it all up, like the other stories. I'm sorry I ever began it, but it was one day when May was in bed with bronchitis, and I'd told every story I knew, and couldn't think of a new one. I didn't mean ever to mention her again, but May was so interested, and she's been asking me to make up about my twin sister ever since."

Mrs. O'Neil sighed, and a look of pain flitted across her sweet face.

"Well, I suppose it can't be helped," she said. "I am afraid the fault was mine in the beginning. I ought not to have told you the story till you were old enough to keep it to yourself."

"Oh, Mother!" cried Nora, the tears starting to her eyes.

"There, there, dearie, don't worry. There isn't anything to cry about, and as long as the Judsons think it is only one of your make-ups, no harm can be done. I only reproach myself for not keeping the secret better, but it was so cruelly hard never to be able to mention my Kathleen's name——" The sentence ended in a quickly suppressed sob.

"Mummy darling, I'm so sorry!" and Nora's arms were round her mother's neck. "I'll never say another word about her to any one, not even to the Judsons, only please, please don't be sorry you told me. Why, it's been the most interesting thing that ever happened. Just think of those wonderful Sunday afternoons in the park, and really seeing her sometimes at the windows, or going out with her father! Why, it's been almost like living in a story."

Mrs. O'Neil kissed the eager, quivering little face, and smiled through her tears.

"Then I am glad I did tell you, darling," she said, "and I am sure I can trust my little girl not to get her mother into trouble. Now come and help me do up my article; the boy from the office will be here in five minutes."

"All right," said Nora, drying her tears, "and then you're going to lie down and rest your poor

head while I get tea. You won't have to go out again to-night, will you?"

"Yes, dear, I am afraid I must. I had a telephone message from the office this afternoon, and they want me to report on a big dinner of Colonial Dames at the Waldorf."

Nora's face fell, but she said nothing. Long experience had taught her that arguing with this plucky, resolute little mother of hers was never of any use. But there was a troubled look in her brown eyes, as she helped tie up the bundle of manuscript, and later, when the boy from the newspaper office had come and gone, and Mrs. O'Neil had thrown herself wearily on the couch, for a few minutes' well earned rest, she covered her mother's feet carefully with a shawl, before starting her preparations for the simple supper.

"If we only had a little bit of Kathleen's money," she said to herself, regretfully, as she lighted the gas stove, and put the kettle on to boil. "I'm sure she'd love to help Mother, if she only knew, but of course I can never, never tell."

CHAPTER II

A REAL ADVENTURE

NORA had been in bed and asleep for more than two hours, when she was aroused by the sound of her mother's latch-key in the door. She was very sleepy, and only opened her eyes to inquire drowsily :

"Was it a very grand dinner, Mummy?"

"Yes, dear, but the speeches were terribly long, and my head ached. I am thankful I don't have to send in my report before Monday, for I am tired out. I am going straight to bed now, and if my cold isn't better I shall stay in bed in the morning."

"That's right. I'll get breakfast. Is it a clear night?"

"Yes, the stars are shining, and there is a full moon. Now go to sleep again ; it's very late."

When Nora awoke the next time it was broad daylight, and the church clock on the corner was striking seven. It was Sunday morning, and there was no hurry, so she turned over, and tried to go to sleep again. She was just falling into a

doze, when she was startled by a sharp fit of coughing from the couch where her mother slept, and in a moment she was sitting up in bed, inquiring anxiously —

"Are you awake, Mummy—is your cold better?"

"I'm afraid it isn't much better, dear," Mrs. O'Neil answered in a rather husky voice. "I've been coughing a good deal in the night."

"And I never heard a sound," said Nora, reproachfully. "Why didn't you call me to get you a drink of water or something?"

"I didn't need anything, chicken, but I don't think I will get up till later. A day's rest will do me more good than anything else. Do you think you can manage breakfast by yourself?"

"Of course I can," declared Nora, springing out of bed. "You know I love getting meals. I'll light the stove, and your coffee will be ready in ten minutes. You know you always feel better when you've had your coffee."

Mrs. O'Neil closed her eyes, with a sigh of content. Her head ached, and the thought of a whole day of rest was very pleasant. It was seldom that she allowed herself such an indulgence. She did not open her eyes again until Nora was at her bedside, breakfast tray in hand.

"Doesn't the coffee smell good?" remarked Nora in a tone of satisfaction, as her mother sat

up in bed, and took the cup of steaming coffee from the tray. "I didn't burn the toast this time either, and I opened a jar of marmalade ; I thought you wouldn't mind, as it was Sunday morning."

"Everything is delicious, darling," said Mrs. O'Neil, heartily ; "you are a famous little house-wife. You cook much better already than I did after I was married, and had gone to housekeeping. How your father used to laugh at my attempts to get dinner on the maid's night out !"

"But you learned afterwards," said Nora, "and so it was all right, wasn't it ? And when Father was ill he used to tell you what a splendid nurse you were, and how very comfortable you made him."

Mrs. O'Neil smiled sadly.

"I am afraid your father was prejudiced," she said, "but I am glad I had learned some things before our troubles came, and the maid had to be dispensed with."

"It's a beautiful day," remarked Nora, irrelevantly, glancing toward the window. "I think it must be quite warm, too. We shall have a lovely afternoon for the park."

"Perhaps so, dear ; I begin to feel better already ; I may be quite well by the middle of the day."

But, despite this hopeful prediction, Mrs. O'Neil continued to cough a good deal, and before the

morning was over had come to the wise conclusion that to go out would be a foolish tempting of Providence.

"I'm very sorry, darling," she told Nora, when the little girl came bounding in from Sunday-school, with the joyful news that "it felt just like spring." "It almost breaks my heart to lose a possible chance of getting a glimpse of my Kathleen, but if I should add to this cold I might be laid up for a week, and what would happen to my work then? I have to report on two large weddings to-morrow, and a suffrage luncheon on Wednesday."

Nora's face fell, but she tried hard to keep the disappointment out of her voice.

"Never mind, Mummy," she said, cheerfully; "we'll have a nice, cozy afternoon in the house. I'll tell you a new story I've made up. I thought of it coming home from Sunday-school, and it's very exciting."

But though she tried hard to be cheerful, it was not easy, and many were the wistful glances she cast out of the window, while preparing the Sunday dinner. After dinner was over, and the dishes were washed and put away, she sat down by her mother's couch, and for a short time everything else was forgotten in the interest of "telling her latest story." Mrs. O'Neil listened attentively, now and then interrupting to ask a question, or

make a suggestion. A writer of some ability herself, she realized that her little daughter's talent for "making-up" was something more than a mere childish amusement. She knew that Nora possessed a gift, which, if properly trained, was sure to bring her in a rich harvest in the years to come. It was a great comfort to the hard-worked little newspaper reporter to feel that whatever might happen to herself, Nora would not be unprovided with the means for earning a livelihood, for she had no near relatives, and there was no one in whose care she could leave her little girl.

"It's a very good story, chicken," she said, when Nora had brought the adventures of her heroine to a satisfactory conclusion. "If you keep on improving, I am almost sure you will write books when you are older."

Nora looked a little doubtful.

"I should love it," she said, "but Father wrote beautiful books, and he never made much money. I think I should like to make money."

"Money isn't everything, dear ; there are other things much more worth while than getting rich. Your father never made a fortune, but he was very happy in his work. I would rather have written some of those poems and plays of his than be the richest woman in New York."

"I know," said Nora. "Of course it's beautiful to be a genius like Father, and I'm very proud

of him, but still, it must be very pleasant to be rich."

Nora checked herself abruptly, startled by the sudden look of pain on her mother's face.

"Don't talk like that, dear," said Mrs. O'Neil, almost sharply; "it hurts me."

"All right, Mummy, I won't, but I didn't know you minded. Oh, Mummy darling, don't cry!" And impulsive Nora flung her arms round her mother's neck and hugged her.

"There, there, darling, it's all right," whispered Mrs. O'Neil, holding her little daughter tight, and hastily brushing away her tears. "I'm just a foolish little Mummy, who ought to be ashamed of herself. But, oh, my darling, think, it was only a chance. You might have been having all the money and all the luxuries instead of Kathleen."

"As if I wanted them!" cried Nora, indignantly. "Why, I wouldn't change places with Kathleen for the whole world. It's lovely to live in a beautiful house, and have lots of clothes, and an automobile, but Kathleen hasn't got you, and when I think of that sometimes it makes me feel so terribly sorry for her I just wish I could do something about it."

Mrs. O'Neil laughed softly.

"You dear little comforter," she said, kissing her. "Do you really love me as much as all that?"

"I love you better than anything in the whole world," said Nora, simply, and after that they were both very happy for a long time.

But as the afternoon wore on Nora grew restless and although she tried hard to interest herself in the book she had brought home from the Sunday-school library, it was easy to see that her thoughts were not on the story. There was no performance at the vaudeville theatre on Sunday, so her services were not required by the Judson family, and after a call at the door of their apartment, to inquire how Jimmy and May were getting on, she came back to the studio feeling that all her efforts at being cheerful were rather a hopeless failure. All the week she had been anticipating this Sunday afternoon, and now it had come, and there was nothing to do but sit at home and read a Sunday-school book.

Mrs. O'Neil was up and dressed by that time, but her cough still troubled her a good deal.

"It is really a beautiful afternoon," she remarked, glancing out of the window; "I wonder if I dare venture out."

Nora's face brightened.

"Perhaps if you put on your warmest things——" she suggested doubtfully, but at that moment her mother was seized by another fit of coughing, and her rising hopes sank again.

"I am afraid to run the risk," said Mrs. O'Neil,

with a sigh. "We might have to sit in the park for a long time."

"Yes, I know we might," said Nora, resignedly, "but it's such a lovely day she'd be almost sure to come out. I'm sure nobody would stay indoors who didn't have to."

There was a short pause, during which Nora stood flattening her nose against the window pane, and gazing away over the chimney-tops in the direction of the park. Then Mrs. O'Neil spoke.

"Nora," she said, slowly, "would you like to go by yourself?"

With a bound Nora was at her mother's side; her eyes fairly dancing with joy and excitement.

"Oh, Mummy darling, may I? I'll be so careful crossing the avenues, and I know the way just as well as you do. Then if I see her I can tell you all about it, and you'll know she's well, and—— Oh, Mummy, please!"

Mrs. O'Neil laughed in spite of her anxiety.

"Well, I believe I will let you go," she said. "You have never been so far by yourself before, but you are a sensible child, and I think I can trust you. It would be a great comfort to know you had seen her, if only for a moment. I get so worried sometimes thinking that she might be ill, and I not know. So hurry and put on your things, dear; I'm afraid it's getting late."

Nora needed no second bidding. Already she had whisked off her house-dress, and was diving into the closet, in quest of more festal attire.

"I'm going to put on my new dress," she announced; "the one you gave me for my birthday. It's just like one she had on the rainy Sunday we saw her going out in the automobile. Oh, Mummy, I do believe if somebody saw me who didn't know there were two of us, they might think I was Kathleen. Wouldn't that be exciting, but how in the world would I ever explain?"

"I sincerely trust nothing of the kind will ever happen," said Mrs. O'Neil, gravely. "You are so much alike that I almost wish I had never copied that dress and hat."

"Oh, don't be sorry, Mummy, please. It's so nice to think I have some things just a little bit like hers. Now I'm ready; wasn't I quick? If I see her I'll throw a kiss—oh, not so she can see it, of course—and I'll say very softly, 'It's from Mother; she sends you her love, and she's so sorry she can't come to-day, on account of her cold.'"

Ten minutes later Nora had crossed Columbus Avenue and Central Park West, and was walking rapidly across the beautiful park to the East Side. The day was warm for March, and the park was crowded with pleasure-seekers, but Nora glanced neither to left nor right, so eager was she to

reach her goal, a certain bench near one of the Fifth Avenue entrances. For more than a year now that particular spot had been to her one of the most fascinatingly interesting places in the world. To most people there might not be anything remarkably interesting about the big brown-stone house on Upper Fifth Avenue, although its front windows did command a fine view of the opposite park, but to Nora that house meant all the excitement and romance of her life. For a long time Nora had wondered why it was that Sunday after Sunday—weather permitting—she and her mother went to the park, and she was told to play about and amuse herself, while Mummy always sat on that one particular bench, and gazed and gazed over at the big house opposite. They never went to any other part of the park except in summer, when all the big Fifth Avenue houses were shut up. Then one day, when she was nearly eleven, Mummy had told her—and from that day Nora's twin sister had been the romance of her life.

Nora's heart began to beat fast as she approached the familiar spot. There were no faces at the windows of the big house; no automobile stood before the door. That was not surprising, however, for it was still early, and, with a sigh of satisfaction, Nora took her seat on the usual bench, prepared to await developments. But,

contrary to her expectations, nothing happened, and as the minutes passed, and the afternoon sun began to sink toward the west, her hopes sank, too, and her heart grew heavier and heavier.

"O dear! what shall I do?" she said to herself, with a sigh. "She must have gone out before I got here, or else perhaps she's ill. Mummy will be so worried if I have to go home and say I haven't seen her. If I could only just make sure she's all right."

Another half hour slipped by, and, with a last desperate glance at the row of empty windows opposite, Nora rose to her feet. She was moving slowly away, when she was hailed by a friendly policeman.

"Hello, kiddie! All alone to-day?"

"Yes," said Nora; "Mother has a cold, and she let me come by myself. I suppose you don't happen to know if the people who live in that big house over there have gone away?"

Nora's tone was eager, and the man regarded her with some curiosity.

"The Crawfords, I suppose you mean," he said. "That house belongs to Duncan Crawford, the great financier. Why, I believe he's gone to Bermuda."

"I know he has, but she hasn't—I mean Kathleen, his little girl. When she's at home she almost always comes to one of the win-

dows on the third floor, but I haven't seen her to-day."

The policeman laughed good-naturedly.

"You seem to be interested in the Crawford kid," he said. "Making a study of millionaires, eh?"

Nora blushed.

"Good-afternoon," she said rather hurriedly; "I'm afraid it's getting late."

In another moment she was walking quickly away. The policeman looked after her curiously.

"It's queer how that young one and her mother turn up just here almost every Sunday," he reflected. "I wonder what they're up to, and why she wanted to know about the Crawfords."

But the policeman had other things to think about, and in a very few moments the memory of the pretty child, with big dark eyes, and long golden curls, had passed from his mind. His beat was taking him rapidly away from the neighborhood of the Crawfords' home, so he failed to notice a little scene, which, if he had noticed, would probably have entirely changed the events of this story.

With feelings somewhat ruffled by the policeman's remark about her interest in millionaires, Nora walked on for several minutes, without turning her head. She was sorry she had asked that question about the Crawfords. Was not her

mother constantly warning her against showing too great an interest in Kathleen?

"Miss Kathleen, Miss Kathleen! stop for goodness sake! Where in the world are you off to now, all by yourself?"

At the sound of the familiar name, Nora paused instinctively, and turned her head. A stout, elderly woman was hurrying rapidly towards her, her whole manner expressive of astonishment and disapproval.

"Oh, Miss Kathleen," she panted, "you've gone and done it again, after promising so faithful you never would. You come right straight home with me just as fast as you can." And Nora felt her arm seized in a firm grasp.

For the first moment sheer astonishment had deprived the child of the power of speech, but as the full realization of what this meant began to dawn upon her, she made a feeble effort to free herself. At this evident desire to escape, the clutch on her arm tightened perceptibly.

"Now, Miss Kathleen, don't you try to get away, because you know perfectly well it isn't any use. You promised your papa you'd be good while he was away, and mind Sarah, and not get into any mischief. Sarah'll have a fit if she finds out about this, and so will Mrs. Anderson."

"But I'm not—" began Nora, desperately. But the woman did not seem to hear. She was

walking very fast, and almost dragging the unwilling child along with her.

"Now, Miss Kathleen, don't hang back like that," she urged ; "it ain't one bit of use. What you want to do it for is more than I can make out, with all the things you've got to amuse yourself within the house. It really is very naughty, you know, but I don't want to see you punished, so if you're good, and come right along with me, I'll take you in the basement way, and nobody'll see you but Lizzie, and I won't let her tell. Mrs. Anderson and Sarah are both out."

"But—but you're making a mistake," faltered Nora, whose heart was by this time beating so fast that she could scarcely breathe. "I'm not Kathleen ; I'm Nora O'Neil ; I——"

She paused abruptly, having suddenly realized that her words were quite wasted on her companion, whose countenance did not even change, and who continued to martial her charge along, in the direction of the park entrance.

"Why, she must be deaf," gasped Nora. "Oh, how ever shall I make her understand?"

Then all at once, her heart gave a great bound. This was an adventure ; the first real adventure of her life. She suddenly ceased her efforts to free herself.

"That's right," remarked her captor, in a tone of evident relief. "Lizzie won't say a word, if I

forbid her, and not another living soul need know how naughty you was, but it was lucky I saw you. I was taking the short cut across the park, home from my daughter's, and when I saw you walking along by yourself, as bold as brass, why, I declare you could have knocked me down with a feather. Now you just look up and down the avenue before we cross ; I'm scared to death of them autos, and I'm so deaf I can't hear their old horns till they're on top of me."

With these words, the woman, still holding her charge firmly by the arm, plunged across the crowded avenue, and in another moment was ringing Mr. Crawford's basement door-bell.

CHAPTER III

KATHLEEN

"**I** REALLY think, Miss Kathleen, that you are, without exception, the most discontented child I have ever seen. The idea of a big girl of twelve years old, complaining and making a fuss, just because she's got to spend a couple of hours by herself."

Kathleen Crawford colored angrily.

"I'm not discontented, Sarah," she protested, "and you haven't any business to say I am either. I don't believe you'd like it yourself if you had to spend a whole beautiful afternoon in the house with nothing to do, and nobody to talk to."

Sarah sniffed scornfully. She was a tall, angular woman, and Kathleen sometimes thought her face was the plainest face she had ever seen.

"Nothing to do!" she echoed. "That's a pretty way for a child like you to talk, isn't it? How about all those new books your papa ordered for you just before he went away? Then there's your beautiful new victrola to amuse you, if nothing else will, to say nothing of your lessons for to-

morrow. I don't believe you've looked at one of them since Miss Hastings and Madame left on Friday."

"I studied my lessons yesterday, and I can't read all day long. I'm tired of all the Victor records. I meant to get some new ones yesterday, but I forgot. So you see I really haven't anything to do. I think you might take me out for a walk."

"Well, I'm not going to, even if you do think so," maintained Sarah. "It's little enough time I have to myself, goodness knows, and I don't intend to give up my Sunday afternoon just because you happen to think you'd like a walk, when half the time it's as much as one's life is worth to coax you out for the exercise your papa wants you to have. Why, the first week you had that talking-machine, you couldn't tear yourself away from it. I declare, it makes me sick the way you tire of everything you have. It's a sin, that's what it is. When I think of other children I've known; dear little Miss Joy, for instance. Left alone all day she was, while her sister was out being companion to an old lady, and she blind, too, and yet never a word of complaint out of her ——"

"Oh, do stop talking about that Joy St. Clair," interrupted Kathleen; "I'm so tired of hearing about her." And as a means of expressing her

weariness of the subject, she flung herself back among the sofa cushions, and closed her eyes.

Sarah looked very much offended.

"Oh, very well," she said, coldly, and, without another word, she walked out of the room.

For several minutes Kathleen lay still with closed eyes. She had made Sarah angry, she knew, for of all people in the world, this Joy St. Clair held the highest place in the maid's estimation. According to Sarah, she was a sort of combination of Elsie Dinsmore and Little Lord Fauntleroy. Kathleen had never seen her, but Sarah had lived for several years with relatives of hers, and ever since her advent in the Crawford household, she had talked so much about the little blind girl's perfection, and had made so many unfavorable comparisons between Joy St. Clair and her present charge, that perhaps there was some excuse for Kathleen's dislike of the subject.

"I know I should hate her," remarked Kathleen to herself, suddenly sitting up on the sofa, and tossing back her long curls. "I hate Sarah, too; I'm going to ask Daddy to send her away as soon as he comes home. Augustine was much nicer, even if she did make me speak French. I thought Sarah was going to be nice when she first came, and it was interesting hearing about Joy St. Clair and Gladys Wentworth, but I didn't

suppose she would go on talking about them forever and ever. I suppose I might as well read ; there isn't anything else to do."

"Miss Kathleen."

Kathleen looked up from the book, the pages of which she had been idly turning for at least five minutes. Sarah, dressed to go out, was standing in the doorway. Sarah was still deeply offended, but she knew her duty.

"I'm going now, Miss Kathleen. If you want anything you know you can ring for Selma."

"Why can't Selma take me out ?" inquired Kathleen, springing to her feet.

"Because she has to answer the door-bell. It's Brown's afternoon out."

"Oh, how I do hate afternoons out !" declared Kathleen, but Sarah, who had no desire for further argument, was already half-way down-stairs.

Kathleen sat listening to the maid's retreating footsteps until the door at the head of the basement stairs closed. Then she rose, tossed aside her book, and went over to the window.

"It really is a beautiful afternoon," she reflected, gazing down at the crowded avenue, and over to the park. "I wish I hadn't promised Daddy never to go out by myself again. I'd love to give Sarah a good fright, and Mrs. Anderson too. It was mean of them both to go out at the same time, and leave me alone. They wouldn't have

dared to do it if Daddy had been at home. I don't suppose that old Joy St. Clair cared whether she stayed in the house all day or not. It can't make much difference to blind people where they are. Oh, I wish Daddy hadn't gone away to Bermuda ; I do miss him so." Suddenly Kathleen found it necessary to turn away from the window, and take out her handkerchief.

She was very lonely ; perhaps more lonely than Sarah realized. Ever since she could remember she had been a small person of a great deal of consequence. Her father worshipped her, and every member of the household had been taught to do her bidding. All her former maids had been her abject slaves, and it was only since the arrival of the stern Sarah that she had ever been treated to anything like discipline. She was not a particularly ill-natured or unreasonable child and she was rather a favorite with most of the servants, but she was so accustomed to being an object of importance to people that Sarah's present indifference was quite a new, and not at all pleasant experience.

"I shall tell Daddy about her the minute he comes home," she told herself, as she wiped her eyes, and went back to the sofa and her book. "She's only a servant, and the servants have got to do what I want."

But even this reflection failed to brighten the

present moment, and after another vain attempt to interest herself in her story-book, Kathleen jumped up, with an impatient sigh. She was tired of reading; tired of music; tired of everything! She glanced about the pretty, luxurious room, and wished that she were anywhere else in the world at that particular moment.

"I'll write a letter to Daddy," she decided. "I can tell him about Sarah, and how horrid everything is, and perhaps he'll hurry home."

She crossed the room to the writing-desk, selected a pen and a sheet of paper, and began to write very fast. Her cheeks were flushed, and her eyes flashed indignantly. It was at that very moment that Nora took her seat on the park bench, and fixed her anxious gaze on the empty windows of the Crawford mansion.

"DEAR DADDY:

"I miss you dreadfully, and I do wish you would hurry home. This is Sunday afternoon, and everything is perfectly horrid. I am all alone by myself, and I think everybody is very selfish and unkind. Mrs. Anderson has gone to Brooklyn to a funeral, and won't be home till tea-time. I didn't see why she had to go, but she said the man who died was an old friend of her father's, and it wouldn't be respectful not to attend his funeral.

"I didn't mind Mrs. Anderson's going to the funeral much, because she is so stupid, and never

any good to talk to, but Sarah has gone out too. I told her she ought not to leave me alone, but she said it was her Sunday out, and I was old enough to take care of myself. It's a perfectly beautiful afternoon, and of course I want to go for a walk. I only had time for a little one after church, because Sarah was in such a hurry to get home to lunch. But I promised you I wouldn't ever go out alone again, and of course there isn't any one to take me. You said I mustn't take the car out on Sunday afternoons, so I can't even have a ride. I am up here in the schoolroom, with nobody to talk to, and not a single thing to do. I know if you were at home you wouldn't have let Sarah and Mrs. Anderson both go out, and, oh, Daddy darling, I do miss you more and more every day. I cried for several nights after you went away, and I keep wishing for you all the time. If you could just telephone to me sometimes, as you used to do when you were in Florida, it wouldn't be half so bad, but Miss Hastings says people can't even telegraph to Bermuda. I wish you wouldn't go to such very far-away places.

"I went to the theatre yesterday afternoon, and the play was very nice. I invited Muriel to go with me, and Sarah took us. Sarah was very solemn all the time, and hardly laughed at all, even at the funniest parts. She says she doesn't enjoy plays, which I think is very silly, for Miss Hastings and Madame both like them, and, being teachers, they ought to know more about such things than Sarah. Muriel came to luncheon, and after the play we went to Maillard's, and had chocolate and cakes. Muriel has asked me to her

house next Saturday, and her father is going to take us to the Hippodrome.

"I knew my lessons pretty well all the week, and Miss Hastings and Madame didn't scold very much. Madame is reading me a lovely French book called '*Sans Famille*.' It is very interesting, but of course I would like it better if it were in English.

"Mrs. Anderson and I went to the cripples' home on Wednesday, and I took the children some candy. I think cripples and blind people have very good times, and I don't think I should mind being one very much. There isn't much fun in being rich, and having lots of nice things, when your daddy goes away to Bermuda, and you have to stay all by yourself on a beautiful Sunday afternoon. I am so tired of having people tell me I ought to be grateful, and how much I have to make me happy. I think it would be rather fun to be poor, just for a change.

"Aunt Kitty came yesterday, but wouldn't stay to luncheon, because she said Uncle Stephen was coming up-town early. She says they may go to Bermuda the week after next. Oh, how I do wish I could go with them! Couldn't I really, Daddy dear? It would make me so very, very happy.

"I am sorry if this letter sounds cross and disagreeable. I don't want to be horrid, but I am very lonely, and I do miss you so, my own daddy.

"With bushels of love, and a whole wagon full of kisses, I am your own little girl, who loves you better than anybody in the world.

"KATHLEEN CRAWFORD."

Kathleen laid down her pen, folded her letter, and put it in an envelope. She had just finished writing the address: "Mr. Duncan Crawford, Princess Hotel, Bermuda," when her attention was attracted by a slight sound, and she turned her head rather curiously in the direction of the door. The next moment she had sprung to her feet, with a cry of astonishment, for there in the doorway stood a little girl with big brown eyes, and long golden curls, so exactly like herself, as she saw herself every day in the mirror, that she felt sure she must be seeing something in a dream.

"Who—who are you?" faltered Kathleen, her eyes round with amazement.

The stranger did not answer, but clasped her hands together with a little cry of distress. She had grown suddenly very pale, and there was a look of something very like terror in her eyes. Kathleen repeated her question.

"Who are you? What do you want?"

"I—I don't want anything," stammered the stranger. "I—I didn't mean to come in, but the woman made me. She watched me all the way up-stairs."

"But who are you?" repeated Kathleen for the third time. "I never saw you before."

The strange girl shook her head.

"I mustn't tell you," she said. "I must go

right straight away again, just as soon as I'm sure that woman isn't watching me."

"But—but you're like somebody I know; you're just like me. Even your voice is like mine. Tell me who you are. Tell me this minute." And Kathleen stamped her foot impatiently. She was recovering from her first amazement, and now curiosity—wild, excited curiosity—was fast taking possession of her.

The stranger began to cry.

"Don't ask me, oh, please don't," she sobbed. "You're not to know anything about us; Mother told me so. Oh, why did I ever come? It was dreadfully wrong, I know it was. It may get Mother into trouble."

Kathleen was touched. She had a kind heart, after all, and she could never bear to see people cry.

"No, it won't get your mother into any trouble," she promised, laying a soothing hand on the visitor's heaving shoulder. "I won't let anybody do anything to you or your mother either, but you've got to tell me who you are; you've just got to. If you don't tell I'll call somebody, and make a fuss, and then perhaps you will get your mother into trouble, so you see you'd better tell right away. Nobody will know about your being here unless I want them to, for all the servants are down-stairs, and there isn't a soul but us on this floor."

The visitor raised her face, down which the tears were still streaming.

"If you'll promise never to tell any one—promise faithfully ——"

"I promise," said Kathleen, impatiently.

"Then I'll tell you, but I suppose you'll be very much surprised, especially if you have never heard of me before. *I'm your twin sister.*"

CHAPTER IV

NORA EXPLAINS

"**I**T isn't true! I don't believe it!"

Kathleen was staring at this girl so like herself, with wild, dilated eyes.

"It is true; it is true," maintained Nora. "Of course you don't believe it; I don't see how you possibly could believe it just at first. I was almost as much surprised when Mother told me."

Kathleen had grown very white, and was beginning to tremble.

"I—I guess I'd better sit down," she said, faintly; "I feel rather queer."

Nora put a protecting arm about her, and drew her to the sofa.

"You'll feel all right in a minute," she said, reassuringly. "May I sit here, too? I've been wanting to know you for such a long time, but I never thought I really should."

"Tell me, tell me all about it, quick," commanded Kathleen, and she clutched Nora's hand, and held it tight, as though fearful that this mysterious visitor might vanish as suddenly as she had appeared.

Nora hesitated.

"I don't believe I ought to tell," she said, "but I guess I'll have to. I know if I were in your place I couldn't wait a minute. But you see, I don't know how much you've heard."

Kathleen gave a violent start, and a look of comprehension came into her face.

"I know some things," she said. "I know Daddy isn't my real—oh, I hate even to think about it, but he isn't my very own father. He told me once a long time ago, because he said he didn't want me to find out in some other way, but he loves me just every bit as much as if I were—— Oh, I don't want to talk about it. I won't even think about it if I can help it."

"But if you don't think about it, how can I tell you?" said practical Nora.

Kathleen made an impatient movement.

"Tell it quick, then," she said, "and I'll try to forget. Daddy never said anything about a twin sister."

"Perhaps he didn't want you to know," suggested Nora. "Did he ever tell you about Mother?"

Kathleen shook her head.

"Of course I knew I must have had a mother," she said, "but I thought she was dead, like Mamma. Mamma died when I was six, and I can't remember her very well. Isn't my other mother dead?"

"No, she isn't," said Nora, softly. "She's the dearest, loveliest person in the whole world, and she loves you—oh, how she does love you!"

"Loves me?" repeated Kathleen, in a low, startled voice. "What makes her love me? She doesn't know me."

"But you're her own little girl, just the same as I am," explained Nora. "It nearly broke her heart to give you up."

"Do you mean when she gave me to Daddy and Mamma?"

"Yes. You see, when we were babies Father and Mother were very poor, and Father was ill. He was ill for a long time before he died, and Mother had to take care of him as well as of us. It was terribly hard, and sometimes there wasn't enough to eat, so when a friend of Mother's came and told her that she knew some very rich people who wanted to adopt a little girl baby, Mother felt she ought to let one of us go. It nearly killed her, though, and if it hadn't been for Father's being so ill, and needing medicines and nourishing food, she never could have done it. We were so exactly alike that nobody but Mother could ever tell us apart; even Father used to make mistakes. Mother wouldn't decide which baby to give, because she loved us both so much, so Father had to do it, and it just happened to be you."

Nora paused, and drew a long, deep breath.

"I'm glad he didn't happen to choose me," she said, simply.

"Why?" inquired Kathleen, in the same low, startled voice.

"Because then I shouldn't have stayed with Mother."

"Do you love her so very much?" Kathleen's lip was quivering, and there were tears in her eyes.

"Of course I do," said Nora; "I love her better than anybody in the world. That's why I'd rather be with her, even though we're poor, and I can't have any of the beautiful things you have. Mother is a newspaper reporter, and we live in a studio at the top of a big apartment house over on the West Side."

"It's very wonderful," said Kathleen, slowly; "it sounds just like something out of a story-book. I'm sure I shouldn't like to be poor, but you say you're glad you're not me."

"Only because I've got Mother. I should love to be you for lots of reasons, but not if I had to live away from Mother."

"I don't remember Mamma very well," said Kathleen, reflectively, "but she was very pretty, and Daddy loved her dearly. I suppose you feel the same way about your mother that I feel about Daddy. I wouldn't leave him if he were the poorest person in the world, but he leaves me

sometimes. He's gone away to Bermuda now, and I miss him dreadfully."

"There's one comfort in being poor," said Nora ; "Mother never goes away and leaves me. She hasn't got money enough, and there wouldn't be any one for me to stay with except the Judsons."

"Who are the Judsons ?"

"Some friends of ours who live on the second floor. I stay with the children sometimes when Mrs. Judson is at the vaudeville theatre. By the way, have you had the measles ?"

"Yes, I had them last winter," said Kathleen ; "why do you want to know ?"

"Because Jimmy and May Judson have them now, and I'm just out of quarantine myself. I haven't been to school for nearly three weeks."

Kathleen settled back more comfortably among the sofa cushions.

"Tell me about school, and the Judsons, and—and about your mother," she said. "It's all very interesting."

And Nora, quite forgetful of the lapse of time, and of the fact that her mother must already be expecting her return, told of home and school, and mother, and her twin sister drank in every word, with a strange, new light in her eyes—a strange, new feeling stirring at her heart. She told of the Sunday afternoons in the park ; of the

patient hours spent in watching for a glimpse of the wonderful twin sister, and ended with an account of her adventure with the maid who had mistaken her for Kathleen.

"It must have been on account of my hat," she said. "You see, it's just like one you wear sometimes. Mother trimmed it, and I got her to copy yours. I tried to make that old woman understand I wasn't you, but she didn't seem to hear a word I said. She brought me in the basement way, and told me to run right up-stairs, and she wouldn't tell any one about my being out by myself. I know I ought not to have come in ; I ought to have made her understand somehow, or told the girl who opened the basement door, but, oh, it was so wonderful, and so exciting ; I just couldn't help myself."

"I'm glad you came," said Kathleen ; "it's the most interesting thing that ever happened to me. That woman must have been Ellen, the cook. She's very deaf, and people have to shout to make her hear anything. She's lived here a long time, and she's very good-natured. I did go out by myself once, and there was an awful row. I just went over to Aunt Kitty's ; it isn't far, and I knew the way perfectly, but nobody knew where I had gone, and Mrs. Anderson and Sarah were frightened. I only went because Sarah had been cross, and I was so tired of having her always tagging

after me everywhere. It wasn't much fun, after all, for Aunt Kitty was out, and I had to come home again. Of course they scolded, and told Daddy, and he made me promise never to go out alone again. I suppose you can go wherever you like."

"I go to school alone," said Nora, "and to some of the stores in the neighborhood, to get things for Mother, but I never came over to this side of the park alone before. Mother only let me come to-day because of her cold. She was afraid to go out herself, and she was so anxious to know you were all right."

"Was she?" said Kathleen. "I'm glad. I didn't know anybody cared very much about me except Daddy. I think I'll go home with you. I want to see her."

Nora clasped her hands in dismay.

"Oh, you couldn't, you couldn't possibly!" she cried. "Mother would love it better than anything in the world, but it would never do. You see, when Mother gave you to the Crawfords, she had to sign a paper, promising never to try to see you without their consent. If Mr. Crawford found out he might be very angry, and it might get Mother into terrible trouble."

"My daddy wouldn't get anybody into trouble," declared Kathleen. "He's much too kind. I'm sure he wouldn't mind my going to see my own

mother. I shall tell him about it the minute he comes home."

"But you promised ; you promised !" pleaded Nora, actually wringing her hands in her distress. "Oh, what shall I do—what shall I do ? I ought never to have told you, but you did promise."

"Yes, I know I did," said Kathleen, "and I don't break promises, either, so you needn't be so worried. Just tell me where you live, though, so I can think about it. Have you really got to go so soon ? I wish you could stay longer ; it's only a little after five."

But Nora could not be persuaded to prolong her visit.

"I must hurry just as fast as I can," she said, firmly. "I'm afraid Mother will be frightened. She might even come out to look for me, and that would be so bad for her cold. Good-bye, Kathleen. Would you—would you let me give you a kiss ? I've often thought how I should love to kiss you."

Kathleen's answer was to fling her arms round her sister's neck, and for a moment the two children clung to each other in silence. Then Kathleen whispered in a rather choked voice—

"It was wonderful to have you come, and I won't ever forget you. Tell her I love her, and if I can ever manage it without anybody's finding out I'm coming to see her."

Nora's face was suddenly illuminated by the light of a great joy.

"Oh, do you think you ever could?" she gasped. "Mother might not think it was right to let you, but I won't say anything to her about it, and then she can't object, and if you really did come I know she'd be too happy to think of anything else. I'll give you our address, and you can write it down, so you won't forget."

"I won't forget," said Kathleen, confidently, and having given the street and number, and another good-bye kiss to Kathleen, Nora tore herself away from the embrace of her twin, and ran swiftly down-stairs. There was no one in sight, and no one heard the opening and closing of the front door. At that very moment, Ellen, the cook, was recounting to a couple of friends—who had dropped in to tea—how she had found little Miss Kathleen all by herself in the park, "as bold as you please," and how she had pounced upon her, and "brought her home as meek as a lamb."

"But I promised I wouldn't tell on her," she added, with an indulgent smile, "for she's a nice little thing, if she *is* spoiled, and Mrs. Anderson and Sarah do keep her very close since Mr. Crawford's been away."

When Mrs. Anderson, the elderly housekeeper, reached home at six o'clock, she found Kathleen curled up in an arm-chair by the schoolroom fire,

apparently doing nothing in particular, and to her inquiries as to how the child had spent the afternoon, she received such short and unsatisfactory responses that she retired to her room somewhat offended, remarking to herself that "Kathleen really was a very cold, unresponsive child." But after tea, when she and Kathleen had gone into the big music room, and the housekeeper had started the organ, which ran by electricity, Kathleen suddenly drew close to her on the sofa, and asked a rather unusual question.

"Mrs. Anderson, did you ever have a mother?"

"Did I ever have a mother?" repeated the housekeeper. "What an absurd question. Of course I had a mother; every one has."

"I mean do you remember her?" said Kathleen, flushing. "You see my mamma died when I was so little that I can't remember her very well. I was wondering about yours."

"My mother lived till I was past forty," said Mrs. Anderson, "but we mustn't talk now; we want to listen to the music."

"I don't care about the music," said Kathleen, impatiently; "I want to talk. Was your mother very fond of you?"

"Certainly she was. My mother was a very fine woman, but unfortunately, she had a paralytic stroke when she was seventy, and was quite helpless for the last ten years of her life. Now

do keep quiet and listen to this beautiful selection. You are the most unreasonable child. Not a word could I get out of you all tea-time, and now just because I want to rest, and listen to the music, you must begin to ask foolish questions."

Kathleen said nothing aloud, but to herself she remarked emphatically —

"I don't believe she'd understand what I mean anyway, so there isn't any use in talking to her."

But later, when Selma, the Swedish chamber-maid, was helping her to undress, in the absence of Sarah, she suddenly broke silence to inquire —

"Have you got a mother, Selma?"

Selma paused, with the hair-brush poised for action, and the tears started to her kind eyes.

"Ah, no, Miss Katleen," she answered in her slow, broken English; "my dear moder did die last year, and it went near to break my heart."

"Did it?" said Kathleen, and there was so much sympathy in her tone that Selma, who was fond of talking, and who had not found many congenial spirits in the Crawford household, was emboldened to continue.

"Yes, Miss Katleen, it was very sad. I love my dear moder so much, and I always tink some day I go back to Sweden to see her. I send her money all de time, but she write she want to see me so much."

"I suppose mothers always want to see their children," said Kathleen, reflectively. "And if a mother had a little girl she had given away to some one else, and could never see her any more, it would make her very unhappy, wouldn't it?"

"Oh, Miss Katleen, what funny tings you say. Moders do not give away dere little girls."

"Sometimes they do," said Kathleen, "when they are very poor, and their husbands are ill. I heard of one mother who did, and she kept on loving her little girl just the same, although she could never speak to her, because she had signed a horrid paper once."

"Ah, but dat is very terrible," said Selma, sympathetically. "Such a ting would sure have killed my moder. When my little sister die, my moder cry and cry all de time ; she want her back so bad. Now, Miss Katleen, de hair is done ; shall I take off de shoes ?"

It was more than an hour later when Sarah reached home. She occupied the small hall-room next to Kathleen, and as she turned on the light, and took off her hat and jacket, she was startled by a sound of low, suppressed sobbing. Going to Kathleen's door, she listened for a moment ; then softly turned the handle. The room was in complete darkness, but there was a slight rustle in the bed.

"Are you awake, Miss Kathleen ?" Sarah's

voice was kinder than it had been in the afternoon.

There was no answer; only the regular breathing of some one who was apparently fast asleep.

"I must have been mistaken," said Sarah to herself, as she closed the door, "but I was sure I heard her crying. What she could have to cry for, though, is more than I can imagine, for if there ever was a spoiled, pampered child, she is one. When I think of dear patient little Miss Joy!" And Sarah's reflection ended in a regretful sigh.

CHAPTER V

KATHLEEN TAKES THE HELM

IT was a lovely April afternoon, and school was out for the day. Down the steps of the big school building was pouring a stream of little girls—little girls of all ages and all sizes and, almost without exception, every tongue was loosened, and was making the best use of its powers.

"Where's Nora O'Neil? I want to speak to Nora O'Neil," stated a tall girl of thirteen, pausing at the foot of the steps, and casting an anxious glance about among the loudly chattering throng.

"I saw her a minute ago," said another girl, also pausing. "She must have stopped to speak to some one. Oh, here she comes. I say, Nora, I should think you'd be too stuck-up to live after having your composition read out loud before the whole class, and Miss Lane's saying such grand things about it."

Nora blushed.

"I'm not stuck-up at all," she declared. "I love writing. My father wrote plays and poems; perhaps that's why compositions seem so easy to

me, but I'm rather stupid in most of my lessons, so it doesn't count for much."

"Well, the composition was fine, anyhow," said the tall girl, slipping an arm affectionately round Nora's waist. "If I'd written anything half so good I know I'd be as proud as Punch. Are you going right home?"

"I've got to wait for May Judson," said Nora. "I promised her mother I'd always see her across the avenue. Here she is. Come along, May; I'm in a hurry."

"I guess I'll walk a little way with you," said the big girl, as May, rather breathless from a race down four flights of stairs, joined the group, and slipped a hot little hand into Nora's. "I want to ask you to do something for me."

"I will if I can," said Nora. "What is it?"

Lina Rosenbaum, whose father was the proprietor of the largest department store in the neighborhood, and who was consequently looked upon as a very important young person among her friends, blushed, and hesitated.

"Maybe you'll think it a little queer," she said in a rather low voice, as the three turned a corner into a quiet side street; "but you see, I'm awfully stupid about making up things. I never can think what to say, and I always get awful marks for my compositions. I've got one to write for next Friday, and I thought perhaps you wouldn't mind help-

ing me. Of course I'd give you something for doing it."

Nora flushed indignantly.

"I wouldn't take anything," she said, bluntly. "I'd be glad to help you with your composition, but I don't believe it would be fair. We're not supposed to have any help, you know."

"Oh, bother!" said Lina, impatiently. "The teachers needn't know anything about it, and it would be such a help to me. My father has promised me a present if I get good marks all next week, and I never get anything higher than fifty for my compositions. If you won't help me I shall think it's because you don't want any one else to write as well as you do."

"It is not!" cried Nora, with flashing eyes. "I wouldn't be so mean for the world. I'd help you if I could, but it wouldn't be right. I can't do mean things even to help people. Mother wouldn't like it."

"Oh, never mind your mother; she needn't know. I don't tell Mamma half the things I do."

"I tell Mother everything," said Nora, simply, and May—who had been listening to the conversation with deep interest—broke in virtuously—

"I always tell my mother everything, too, just the same as Nora. Say, Lina, what would you give Nora if she wrote that composition for you?"

"I didn't ask her to write it; only to help me with it," protested Lina, "and I would give her something lovely, but I won't tell what."

"Maybe she'll do it if you tell," suggested May, with pardonable curiosity, but Nora cut her short.

"No, I won't, and you needn't tell me, Lina. I'm very sorry, but Miss Lane told expressly that we were not to ask for any help in our compositions. I'm sure you can do it all right if you really try. You're ever so much cleverer than I am in most things. Now come along, May; I promised Mother to come right home from school."

"Don't you like presents, Nora?" inquired May, when Lina had taken a sulky departure, and they were hurrying on in the direction of home.

"I love them," said Nora; "I guess everybody does; but it wouldn't be fair to take a present for doing something that wasn't right."

May gave the elder girl an admiring glance.

"You're very good," she said in a tone of conviction. "I guess you must be 'most as good as Elsie Dinsmore. She's a girl in a book I brought home from Sunday school last week, and she was so good she wouldn't play the piano on Sunday, even when her father ordered her to do it. She never did anything except what she read in the Bible that she ought to do. It's a lovely book,

but some of it's very sad. Lina has beautiful things. Perhaps she'd have given you a pair of earrings like those she wears herself."

Nora laughed.

"Mother wouldn't let me wear them if she did," she said. "Now we're going to cross the avenue so keep tight hold of my hand till we're on the other side."

"Why, there's a big automobile in front of our house!" remarked May, as, having safely crossed the avenue, they turned their own corner. "There's a lady inside, and she looks as if she's gone to sleep."

"The chauffeur looks as if he were asleep, too," said Nora. "They must be waiting for some one." And, with an indifferent glance at the handsome limousine, she hurried up the steps—which the janitor happened to be cleaning—and in at the open front door of the apartment house. At sight of Nora, the janitor paused in his sweeping.

"I thought I saw you come in before," he remarked in a tone of some surprise.

"I guess you must have seen my ghost," said Nora, laughing. "I'm just home from school! Did you happen to see Mother come in?"

"Yes, she came in quite a while ago, and I was that sure—but well, my wife does say I see queer things sometimes."

"Come in and tell me a story," pleaded May, as they paused on the second landing. "Jimmy's gone to the show with Mamma, and they won't be home for ever so long."

Nora shook her head.

"I've got to go and see Mummy first," she said. "Maybe I'll come down by and by. I'm so anxious to tell Mummy about the composition." And Nora hurried on up the stairs, to the sunny studio, where she was always sure of receiving a joyful greeting from her cheerful, hard-working little mother.

"Here I am, Mummy, and I've got something lovely to tell you. I've —"

Nora had opened the studio door, but as she crossed the threshold the words suddenly died on her lips, and she stood quite still, rooted to the spot by sheer amazement at the sight which met her view. For there, in the big rocker between the windows, sat her mother, and in her lap—one arm flung affectionately about her neck—was—Kathleen! At the sound of the opening door both faces were turned in her direction, and the next moment Kathleen had sprung from her mother's lap, and rushed forward to meet her, with the joyful exclamation—

"I'm here, Nora! I came, you see. Oh, isn't Mother wonderful?"

"Kathleen!" gasped Nora, "oh, Kathleen!"

And the twins hugged each other in a rapture of excitement and delight.

But it was of her mother that Nora was thinking most, and as she turned from the eager Kathleen to the little woman in the rocker, her heart gave a great bound, for never, never before had she seen such a look of joy on Mummy's face. With a little cry, Mrs. O'Neil held out her arms.

"Come here, both of you," she said. "Oh, my darlings, to think of having you both in my arms together! It seems too beautiful and wonderful to be true."

"But how—how did you ever manage it?" demanded Nora, when they were all a little calmer, and were sitting on the couch together, Mrs. O'Neil in the middle, with an arm round each twin.

"I'll tell you," said Kathleen. "It's quite a long story, though, and Mother heard it all before you came in."

"Never mind, darling," said Mrs. O'Neil; "I can't hear it too often. Tell Nora all about it."

"Well," began Kathleen, "I've been thinking and thinking about you and Mother ever since that Sunday afternoon. I couldn't think of anything else, and I dreamt about you almost every night. The next Sunday I thought I should see you in the park, and I meant to spend the whole

afternoon just looking out of the window, but it rained so hard there was hardly anybody out. I was so disappointed that I cried, and Sarah couldn't imagine what the matter was, and Mrs. Anderson said I must be nervous. I had to let them think I was just missing Daddy, and of course I did miss him, too, but that wasn't what made me cry. All the week I kept thinking about the next Sunday, but when it came it rained even harder than it did the Sunday before. Then I got to worrying about Mother. I remembered you said she had a bad cold, and I was afraid that she might get pneumonia and die, and I should never see her at all, and that made me dreadfully unhappy. That's right ; hug me again, Mother ; I love it.

" Well, I guess I was pretty cross, and I couldn't seem to pay attention to my lessons. At last Miss Hastings spoke to Mrs. Anderson, and she sent for the doctor. He gave me a nasty tonic, and said he thought I needed a change. I was afraid a change meant going to Atlantic City, and I said I wouldn't go. I was there last year, and I got so tired of the wheel-chairs, and the concerts on the pier. Besides, I wanted to be at home on Sunday, in case you and Mother came to the park. I made a good deal of fuss, and the doctor said I needn't go away if I objected so much.

" I wanted to come here—oh, you can't think

how I wanted to—but I didn't see how I was ever going to manage it. I hardly ever go out without Sarah or Mrs. Anderson, and I'd promised you not to tell any one. But this afternoon such a wonderful thing happened ! Sarah came to me after lunch, and said she was going to be very busy, and would I mind going out with Selma instead of with her. Selma is the chambermaid, and she doesn't understand English very well, and always does just what I tell her. So when Sarah asked me that, my heart just gave a big jump, and I said right away that I wouldn't mind a bit.

"I didn't say anything to Selma till we were out in the park, and then I asked her if she would do me a great favor, and she said, 'Certainly, Miss Katleen,' just as she always does whenever I ask her to do anything. So I told her I wanted to go and see a lady who used to know me when I was a little baby, and wanted to see me very much. I didn't want her to come in with me, but just to wait outside in the car. Of course if I had said that to Sarah she would have asked a lot of questions, and insisted on knowing all about it, but Selma just said, 'Certainly, Miss Katleen,' again, so I rang the bell, and told Michael to bring us here. Michael is quite a new chauffeur, and doesn't know where I'm in the habit of going, so he just touched his hat, and said, 'Very good, Miss,' and in a few minutes we were here.

"When I saw the house I was so excited that I began to shake all over, and when Michael jumped down to ring the bell, and asked me what name I wanted, I could hardly answer 'Mrs. O'Neil.' But nobody noticed, and I came up-stairs all by myself.

"I remembered you said you lived on the top floor, so I kept on going up till there weren't any more stairs, and then I knocked at this door. I heard somebody say, 'Come in,' and I was sure it must be Mother, because it was such a sweet voice. So I opened the door, and Mother was writing on the typewriter, and she just turned her head a little, and said, 'Why, Nora darling, what made you knock?' I didn't say a word, and when she saw me standing there, shaking all over, she knew all of a sudden that I wasn't Nora, and then — Oh, I can't tell the rest; it was all so beautiful and wonderful!" And Kathleen buried her face on her mother's shoulder with a sob.

"And have you been here long?" inquired Nora, with deep interest.

Mrs. O'Neil gave a sudden start, and a frightened look came into her face.

"Oh, Kathleen darling," she exclaimed anxiously; "I am afraid we have both forgotten the time. You must go, my precious, or the maid will be coming to look for you. It must be at least an hour since you came."

"Go!" repeated Kathleen, lifting her face in astonishment. "Oh, I'm not going for ever so long. I've only just come."

Poor little Mrs. O'Neil looked very much distressed.

"My dear little girl," she said tremulously, "if you knew what it cost me to send you away! I have wanted you for so long, and now you have come to me of your own accord, but I dare not let you stay. Mr. Crawford might be very angry, and I have no right——"

"No, Daddy wouldn't be angry," interrupted Kathleen; "I know he wouldn't. Anyhow, I'm not going, and if people make a fuss I'll say it was all my fault. I've found you, and I'm going to stay with you, I am; I am!" And she flung her arms round her mother's neck, and clung to her.

Mrs. O'Neil gazed helplessly from Kathleen to Nora.

"What am I to do, Nora?" she faltered; "oh, what can I do?"

Suddenly Nora sprang to her feet, her face aglow with excitement.

"I've got an idea!" she cried. "Mother, are we really just exactly alike?"

"So much alike that I don't believe even I could tell you apart except for your clothes," her mother answered.

"Then I don't see why we couldn't do it. Oh, Mother darling, it's such a wonderful idea. Kathleen, would you be satisfied if you could spend just one night here with Mother? Would you be willing to go home again in the morning?"

"Nora," protested Mrs. O'Neil, "what are you talking about? Of course Kathleen couldn't —"

"Yes, she could. Just wait till you hear my plan. It popped into my head all of a sudden, and it's wonderful. Why can't Kathleen and I change clothes? Then she could stay here all night, and you could be so happy together." There was a catch in Nora's voice, and she caught her breath in a quickly suppressed sob.

Kathleen clapped her hands.

"You mean you will go home instead of me!" she cried. "Why, of course you can, and it will be the greatest fun. Nobody will ever find out, and I can tell you just what to do, so you won't make mistakes. Oh, Nora, what a darling you are to think of it!"

"But, my dear children, I never heard of such nonsense," cried Mrs. O'Neil. "Of course I could never consent to such a deception. Nora, I believe that romantic little brain of yours will run away with you some day."

Nora's face fell, but Kathleen had not had her own way for twelve years for nothing.

"I'm not going home to-night," she announced.

"I'm going to stay here whether Nora takes my place or not. If you try to make me go, I shall scream, and maybe I shall have a convulsion. I used to have them when I was little, and the doctor told Daddy I mustn't be crossed."

"A convulsion!" gasped Mrs. O'Neil, turning pale. "Oh, my darling, I never heard of that. How very terrible!"

"Well, I haven't had one since I got my teeth," Kathleen admitted, "but I might if I were very much upset, and, oh, Mother darling, if you make me go right straight away again, I know it will break my heart." And Kathleen burst into a perfect tempest of crying, and clung to her mother as if she would never let her go again.

Mrs. O'Neil gazed helplessly at Nora, a world of agony and longing in her eyes.

"Do you think you could possibly do it?" she whispered.

"I'm sure I could, if Kathleen would tell me a few things," Nora declared. "It would be just like acting a part in a play, and Mrs. Judson says she is sure I could act. Oh, Mother, I'm so sorry! It's all my fault. If only I hadn't gone up-stairs to see Kathleen that Sunday, it could never have happened. But now it has happened, and Kathleen will be so unhappy if we send her away so soon. Won't you let me try to do something to help?"

"I won't go!" sobbed Kathleen; "I said before I wouldn't. I'll go to-morrow if I have to, but I'm going to spend this one night with Mother. It won't be a bit hard, Nora, it really won't. Mrs. Anderson has gone to see her daughter in Brooklyn, and won't be home to dinner, so the only person who matters is Sarah. Sarah isn't nearly as clever as she thinks she is, and I'm sure she won't suspect a thing. You know where the school-room is, and my bedroom is right next. You can just throw your things on the bed, and Sarah will put them away. Then you can read, or play the victrola, or do anything you like till dinner-time. Brown will wait on the table, and he never talks, so you can just eat, and go up-stairs again. Nobody will bother you, and you can go to bed whenever you feel like it. Sarah will brush your hair, but you needn't talk to her; she'll only think you're sulky. Perhaps she'll begin about Joy St. Clair, but you needn't pay any attention, or you can tell her you're not interested."

"I'm afraid that wouldn't be very polite," objected Nora. "Don't you ever talk to people at home?"

"Not very much, except to Daddy. They're all so stupid, you see, and I don't think any of them like me."

Instinctively Mrs. O'Neil's arms tightened about the little figure in her lap.

"Oh, my darling, don't say that," she murmured. "I am sure they all love you dearly."

Kathleen shook her head.

"No, they don't," she maintained. "Nobody loves me but Daddy and you. I know you love me; that's why I'm going to stay with you. Now listen, Nora, and I'll explain just what you are going to do. I've thought it all out and it's very easy. To-morrow is Saturday, so there won't be any lessons to bother about. You'll have to see Mrs. Anderson at breakfast, I suppose, unless you have it in bed. But she never bothers much about things, and I'm quite sure she'll never find out. Then right after breakfast you say you want the car, and that you're going to take out Muriel Trevor. Don't forget that name, Muriel Trevor. It's all right, because I did intend to take her, and to bring her home to lunch afterwards. The Trevors live right around the corner from us, and Muriel's Fräulein always goes with her, so Sarah won't expect to be taken along. Then, when you get out, just tell Michael to bring you here again, and I'll be all ready. We can change clothes, and I'll take your place in the car and go for Muriel. Oh, it's just the most exciting thing that ever happened! I'm going to stay here to-night, with my own mother, and nobody is going to know a single thing about it but us, only when Daddy comes home I shall have to tell

him, because I always tell him everything. He won't be angry, though, for he's much too kind, and he loves me so much he wouldn't let my mother be unhappy for the world."

CHAPTER VI

NORA PLAYS A PART

WITH a long sigh, Nora sank back in the corner of the big limousine, and tried to think she wasn't frightened. Her heart was beating in big thumps, and she was conscious of the fact that she was trembling. Then she realized that the door of the car was still open, and that the chauffeur was waiting for orders.

"Home, Miss Kathleen?" he inquired respectfully.

Nora nodded. To have spoken just then would have been impossible. The chauffeur closed the door, sprang to his seat, and the car started. Nora leaned forward to catch one more glimpse of the familiar house, where she knew her mother was watching from the studio window. She would have waved a cheerful good-bye, just to show Mummy she wasn't frightened, but already the car had turned the corner.

"Miss Katleen make very long call."

At the sound of the gentle voice, Nora turned with a start, to the pretty, placid young woman, who was occupying the opposite corner.

"I'm sorry I kept you waiting so long," she faltered, "but—but we had a good deal to talk about. I hope you weren't cold."

"Oh, no, not at all. It is very good of Miss Katleen to tink of dat. De air is beautiful, and I tink I did take a little sleep. We will not tell Sarah. She does not tink it right dat one sleeps in de car."

"No, we won't tell her," promised Nora. "She doesn't suspect anything," she added to herself. And then, remembering Kathleen's instructions not to talk much, she relapsed into silence which remained unbroken until they had bowled rapidly across the park, and drawn up at Mr. Crawford's door.

"Any more orders, Miss?" inquired the chauffeur, as Nora and Selma stepped out of the limousine.

"Oh, no, thank you," said Nora, and the idea that any one should ask her for orders struck her as so funny that she was seized by a sudden, almost irresistible desire to laugh. She hurried up the steps rather faster than might otherwise have been the case, and so failed to see the look of surprise on the chauffeur's face.

"My lady's getting very polite all of a sudden,"

he remarked in a low tone to Selma, but the maid—who was hurrying up the steps after her charge—did not answer.

Nora remembered the way to the schoolroom, and encountered no one as she went up the two flights of stairs to the third floor.

"Shall I take de hat?" inquired the gentle Selma, "and will Miss Katleen like to change her dress?"

"No, thank you," said Nora. "Yes, I will, though," she added, with a sudden inspiration. "I'd like to wear the dress Kath—I mean the one I wore at the birthday party." All at once it occurred to Nora that she was going to enjoy "her part."

Selma looked very much surprised, but before she could speak, a tall, thin person, in a black dress, appeared on the scene.

"Indeed you'll do nothing of the kind, Miss Kathleen," declared this person in a very stern, disapproving voice. "Who ever heard of such an idea! To wear one of your very best dresses at home, where there isn't a living soul to look at it! You'll keep on just what you've got. Here, give me your hat, and then go into the schoolroom, and stay there till dinner-time. I'm as busy as I can be, fixing over your things in here, and the whole place is upset."

Nora said nothing, although she doubted

whether Kathleen would have submitted quite so meekly, and when the tall woman had taken her outdoor things, and the more respectful Selma had disappeared, she went into the schoolroom, and began to look about for some means of passing the time until she should be summoned to dinner. Three minutes later, she was kneeling before the bookcase, her eyes scanning the long list of titles with almost hungry delight. Of all things in the world, Nora loved reading, and never before had it been her privilege to find herself alone in the presence of such a number of fascinating books.

In her interest in these treasures, she almost forgot, for the moment, that she was "playing a part." She examined one book after another; looked at pictures, turned pages, and finally became so absorbed in an exciting story that she quite forgot the lapse of time and was only brought back to her present surroundings by the sound of a voice at her side.

"Time to take your medicine, Miss Kathleen."

The tall woman was standing over her, with a glass in her hand, and a very determined expression on her face. Nora recalled Kathleen's mention of "a nasty tonic," and instinctively shrank back.

"I don't think I'll take it this evening," she faltered; "I feel perfectly well."

"You're not perfectly well even if you do feel so," snapped Sarah. "That's only an excuse, and you know it. The doctor's orders are that this medicine is to be taken three times a day for the next two weeks. Come now, swallow it. The quicker it's over, the better it'll be."

There seemed no help for it, so Nora swallowed the contents of the glass at a gulp. It certainly was very disagreeable, and she did not blame Kathleen for objecting to her tonic. Sarah watched her keenly, but there was neither doubt nor suspicion in her glance.

"That's a good girl," she remarked, and there was approval in her tone. "If you would always take it that way, you wouldn't mind half so much. Here's a peppermint to take away the taste. Now, you'd better put up those books. It's dinner-time."

Meekly, Nora replaced the books she had been examining, and she had just finished when there came a gentle tap at the door, and the butler presented himself, with the announcement —

"Dinner is served, Miss."

"I feel just as if I really were acting in a play," Nora said to herself, as she followed the butler down to the dining-room. "I don't believe any other girl ever had quite such a funny experience. If I could only tell the girls at school about it, how interesting it would be, but I suppose it will



AND SHE DID ENJOY HERSELF, DESPITE THE STRANGENESS OF IT ALL.

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always have to be a secret. Oh, what a beautiful place!"

Nora had paused on the threshold of the dining-room, and was gazing in delighted admiration at the beautiful room, and the table sparkling with glass and silver.

"Why, it looks as if there were going to be a party!" The words were out before she could stop them, but the next moment she had realized her mistake, and was blushing scarlet, as she slipped into the chair the butler had pushed forward for her. The man looked pleased.

"I am glad you like the table, Miss," he said, respectfully. "I put on the pink candle shades, as you requested last night."

"It was very kind of you," murmured Nora, then stopped in confusion. Was it the correct thing to tell butlers they were very kind? She had never had any experience with a butler before. Well, it was only for one evening, at any rate, and she was going to enjoy herself.

And she did enjoy herself, despite the strangeness of it all. What a good dinner that was, and how wonderfully everything was served! First came a delicious soup, with little pieces of toast floating about in it. Then fish, with a queer sauce, that burned her tongue, but was very good, notwithstanding. Then roast chicken, with cranberry jelly, and several different vegetables.

Finally, a delicious dessert, which seemed to be compounded of every good thing imaginable, all mixed up together, and served in a form like jelly. If only Mummy could have been there. That was Nora's one unfulfilled desire.

"Your appetite is much better to-night, Miss," remarked the butler, breaking the silence for the first time, as he gave Nora her second helping of chicken. "If you keep on like this, you won't have to take tonics much longer."

He spoke so pleasantly, and looked so good-natured, that Nora smiled.

"I don't like that tonic at all," she said, confidentially. "I never took—I mean I hope I sha'n't have to take it long."

She would have liked to continue the conversation, for she was not fond of remaining silent, and there was something rather appalling about the big dining-room, and the long table with nobody at it but herself, but Brown, who was English, and had strict ideas about the duties of a butler, said no more, and remembering Kathleen's instructions, Nora held her peace.

Dinner over, she went back to the schoolroom, intending to go on with her book, but somehow her interest in books seemed to have suddenly flagged. It was all so strange and unusual, and now that bedtime was approaching, she was beginning to feel queer, and just a little frightened.

She had never been away from her mother for a night in her life. She was glad Mummy had Kathleen, of course, oh, very glad indeed. Mummy had so longed for her other twin, and now she had her all to herself, just for to-night. Still, if she could only have been there too, Mummy would have been just as happy. She thought of the big, shabby studio, and Mummy in the rocker, with Kathleen in her lap. She wondered if Kathleen had helped wash the dinner dishes. It was not likely that people who lived in palaces knew much about housework. She had been envying her twin sister in her beautiful home, ever since Mummy had told her the story, but now all at once she realized that being the adopted daughter of a millionaire, and having an automobile, and all the fine clothes one wanted, didn't mean so very much, after all. What was the use in having beautiful dresses if one were not allowed to wear them when one chose, and then to have a person like that disagreeable Sarah always about, instead of Mummy—Kathleen had said that nobody cared much about her except her daddy. Poor Kathleen! If only they could all live together and be happy! Suddenly Nora began to cry, without precisely knowing why.

"What in the world is the matter, Miss Kathleen?"

At the sound of Sarah's astonished voice, Nora

—who had flung herself on the schoolroom sofa—lifted her head from the cushions, and hastily sprang to her feet. She was conscious of the fact that her cheeks were wet.

"There isn't anything the matter," she explained hastily. "I—I only just lay down for a few minutes. I guess, perhaps, I'd better go to bed."

"You've been crying," maintained the uncompromising Sarah.

Nora blushed, and her eyes dropped, but she said nothing.

"Now see here," said Sarah, and Nora was surprised to find how kind her voice could be, "you've got to stop this fretting. It doesn't do a bit of good, and besides it's very silly. You don't know what may happen to-morrow."

Nora admitted that she did not.

"Well, just wait and see. We never know what's before us, and may be to-morrow night at this time you'll be laughing at yourself for having cried to-night. I know you miss your father, but as I said before, there isn't any use in fretting. Now do you really want to go to bed? Because if you do, I'll help you undress, and then run round to see my mother for a little while."

"You can go right away if you want to," said Nora, eagerly; "I don't need any help." She felt as though a weight had been suddenly lifted

from her shoulders, but it did seem rather funny to be suspected of missing a person she had never seen.

Sarah laughed grimly.

"You don't need any help, don't you?" she said, sarcastically. "Well, I must say I'd like to see you try to do something for yourself once in a while. You're about the most helpless child I ever saw. When I think of—when I think of all poor little Miss Joy did for herself —"

Nora rose. She realized that if she hoped to carry out "her part," she must not let Sarah suspect that she had dressed and undressed herself every day of her life since she was nine. She would have liked to ask some questions about "Miss Joy," but it would not do to display ignorance on that subject, any more than any other, so she followed the maid to the big, luxurious bedroom, and there submitted patiently to having her hair brushed and braided, her shoes and stockings taken off, and various other things, which it seemed to her quite absurd that any girl of twelve could not have done for herself.

"Why, I declare, you're getting real fat," observed Sarah in a tone of surprise, as she whisked off Nora's dress. "I'll have to begin letting out some of your things. I don't know what that doctor meant by saying you were losing flesh."

"If I'm getting fat, perhaps I won't have to

take any more of that medicine," ventured Nora, with a sudden hope. "It's very horrid."

"The doctor's orders must be obeyed," returned Sarah, and the subject was dropped.

"Now kneel down and let me hear you say your prayers," commanded Sarah, when Nora was in her nightgown, ready to get into bed.

Nora hesitated.

"Must I say them out loud?" she inquired, timidly. "Can't I wait and say them to myself after you've gone away and put out the light?"

Sarah shook her head.

"I can't depend on you," she said. "As like as not you'll fall off to sleep and forget all about your prayers. I never leave a child till I've heard her say her prayers properly."

Nora sighed, but dared not argue, so she dropped on her knees by the bedside, and reverently repeated *The Lord's Prayer*, and "*Jesus, Tender Shepherd, Hear Me*" aloud. She was a little afraid lest Kathleen might be in the habit of repeating some other prayer, but Sarah appeared satisfied.

"You said them very well to-night," she remarked approvingly, as Nora rose from her knees. "Now get into bed, and I'll put out the light. I won't shut the door tight, and if you should want anything you can ring for Selma."

"I believe she really means to be kind," Nora

said to herself, as she sank down in the soft bed, and the maid tucked in the clothes. "It's just her funny way of talking that seems cross. Good-night, Sarah," she added aloud; "I hope you'll find your mother well."

"Thank you, Miss Kathleen," said Sarah, and to herself she added, as she left the room —

"If she was always as little trouble as she's been to-night, a person might get real fond of her in time."

For some minutes after Sarah had left her, Nora lay, with wide-open eyes, staring into the darkness. She was not at all sleepy. Indeed, it was earlier than her usual bedtime, and the strangeness and excitement of her position were enough to keep her awake for hours. It was all very comfortable, and all very interesting, but, oh, if she could only just say good-night to Mummy! She would not change places with Kathleen permanently; no, not for the world. Life in this big, luxurious house without Mummy would be a very dreary affair indeed. Then she remembered that Kathleen had never known Mummy until to-day. A lump rose in her throat, and the tears started to her eyes.

"I don't believe she'll ever want to come back," she said to herself, with a sob. "Nobody could possibly ever want to leave Mummy. I guess I'll say my prayers again. It didn't seem like

really saying them before. I'm sure nobody can really pray with another person listening to every word."

She folded her hands, and whispered, "Our Father," and "Jesus, Tender Shepherd," all over again, and then she added a little petition of her own, that God would watch over Mother and Kathleen, and bring her safely home in the morning.

"Miss Kathleen."

At the sound of the low voice at the door, Nora opened her eyes with a start.

"What's the matter?" she inquired, anxiously.

"Notting, Miss Katleen, but Sarah has gone out. Would Miss Katleen like dat I make de lady sing, like I do last Sunday night?"

Nora was going to ask "What lady?" but checked herself just in time.

"All right," she said, and lay down again, not without a feeling of considerable curiosity.

She listened to the sound of Selma's retreating footsteps. There was a moment of silence, and then she heard the sound of low, soft music, and Alma Gluck's wonderful voice began to sing :

"Mid pleasures and palaces though I may roam,
Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home.
Home, sweet, sweet home ; there's no place like home."

"It's the victrola in the schoolroom," murmured

Nora, with a little sigh of pleasure. "How beautiful it is! If Mummy were only here, too, but it's true what the song says, there isn't any place in the world quite like home."

CHAPTER VII

THE UNEXPECTED HAPPENS

"**A**RE you awake, Miss Kathleen? It's time to get up."

Nora opened her eyes, and sat up. For the first moment she could not remember where she was, and stared about the unfamiliar room in bewilderment. Then it all came back in a rush of memory, and she realized that it was morning, and that Sarah, already dressed, was standing by her bedside.

"What time is it?" she inquired, more for the sake of saying something than because she really particularly cared.

"Only seven, but you've got to get up early this morning. You're going somewhere right after breakfast."

Sarah spoke quite pleasantly; she was even looking a little excited, but Nora did not notice that.

"I know all about it," she said, eagerly. "I'm to take Muriel Trevor for a ride, and I'm to go for her by myself, because her Fräulein always goes with her."

Nora felt rather proud of having remembered her lesson so well, but Sarah smiled rather mysteriously.

"Your bath is ready," she said, "and please hurry, for breakfast is at a quarter to eight."

Nora had no objection to hurrying. Indeed, now that the night was over, her chief desire was to get home as soon as possible. How she did hope Kathleen would be ready to leave at once, and would not make a fuss, as she had done yesterday!

"I managed pretty well for one night," she told herself, as she plunged into the warm bath Sarah had prepared for her, "but I couldn't possibly keep it up much longer. Kathleen has got to come home this morning, whether she wants to or not. Anyway, she's used to getting on without Mummy, and I'm not."

Sarah seemed very busy and preoccupied. She kept dashing in and out of the room, and several times Nora heard her speaking in the hall, as if giving orders to some one. Nora did not pay much attention, however, for, after all, the affairs of the Crawford household were no concern of hers.

"I suppose I shall have to meet that other person Kathleen talked about," she said to herself, rather anxiously, as she went down to breakfast. "Oh, I do hope she won't find out, but if she

doesn't pay any more attention to me than Sarah and the butler, it will be all right."

Her heart began to beat rather fast, when she entered the dining-room, and saw an elderly lady in a widow's cap, already at the breakfast-table, but the lady merely gave her a nod, and a curt "Good morning, Kathleen," and her courage rose again. Brown, the butler, was standing behind her chair, and she wished him a pleasant "Good morning," which seemed to cause him some little surprise. The housekeeper also looked up from her coffee—looking as if something had surprised her.

"It's a lovely morning, isn't it?" remarked Nora, feeling that it was incumbent upon her to say something.

"It looks so now," was the housekeeper's rather guarded admission, "but I shouldn't be surprised if we had rain before night. I have that pain in my rheumatic joint that I always have before a storm."

Nora glanced out of the window at the bright Spring sunshine.

"It must be rather interesting to know what the weather is going to be," she said. "It doesn't look a bit like rain this morning, but I suppose if you were going off anywhere for the day, you'd take an umbrella. It's very uncomfortable to get your hat spoiled in the rain, don't you think so?"

"It never seems to trouble you very much," said Mrs. Anderson, dryly, at which remark Nora blushed, and relapsed into silence.

At home, breakfast usually consisted of cereal and milk, with a cup of coffee for Mummy, and an egg, as a special treat, on Sunday. But here there were two kinds of cereal to choose from, bacon and eggs, broiled kidneys, and griddle-cakes. It was all delicious, but Nora did not enjoy it quite as much as she had enjoyed her dinner the evening before. The strain was beginning to tell upon her, and she was only anxious to get home, and bring her adventure to a satisfactory conclusion. She wondered how soon it would do to ask some one to send for the car. But in the meantime she must keep on "playing her part," so she made another effort to start a conversation.

"Sarah went to see her mother last night, and Selma started the victrola. A lady with a beautiful voice sang 'Home Sweet Home.' Don't you love the victrola?"

"I cannot say that I am very fond of it," said Mrs. Anderson, with a sigh. "I have heard too much real music in my life to care for that sort of thing. But don't stop to talk now. Hurry and finish your breakfast; Sarah is waiting for you."

"What does she want me for?" inquired Nora, in a tone of sudden apprehension. Kathleen had

assured her that there would not be the slightest difficulty in getting away from Sarah.

Mrs. Anderson smiled mysteriously, and glanced at the clock.

"You will know before long," she said, not unkindly, and then she took up the morning paper, and began to read.

But it was impossible to hurry very much over such a wonderful breakfast, and Nora was just beginning on her second helping of cakes, when Brown announced respectfully that Sarah was waiting, and would Miss Kathleen please come at once? With a sigh of regret, Nora laid down her knife and fork, and rose from the table. Mrs. Anderson put down her newspaper at the same moment.

"Run up-stairs and get on your things," she said, with another glance at the clock. "The car is waiting at the door."

Nora's spirits rose. Getting away was going to be even easier than she had thought possible. She ran quickly up the two flights of stairs to the schoolroom floor, but there her feelings underwent a sudden change, for standing at the head of the stairs, in hat and jacket, was Sarah.

"Come right along, Miss Kathleen," she said in her quick, decided voice; "I've got your things all ready, and there isn't any time to waste."

"But—but I thought I was to go by myself,"

faltering Nora, in dismay, as Sarah was helping her into a long gray coat, which seemed unnecessarily heavy for that warm Spring morning.

"Are you going, too?"

"Where did you think you were going by yourself?" inquired Sarah, sharply.

"Why, I thought I was going to take Muriel Trevor for a ride," explained Nora, whose heart was rapidly sinking.

Sarah laughed.

"You didn't suppose you were going for Miss Muriel at this hour of the morning, did you?" she said. "It's only just half-past eight."

In a kind of dream, Nora submitted to the putting on of hat and gloves, and followed Sarah down-stairs. Some part of Kathleen's well-laid plan was evidently going wrong. However, there was nothing to be done but pull herself together, and try to look cheerful. Mrs. Anderson was waiting in the front hall.

"Good-bye, Kathleen," she said, and Nora noticed that she was smiling, as if she were very much amused about something.

"Good-bye," said Nora. "It's a lovely morning for a ride, isn't it?"

"Very lovely indeed," said the housekeeper, and she and Sarah exchanged amused glances. "Good-bye, dear," she added, kindly; "I hope you will have a pleasant time."

"And now I suppose you'd like to know where we're going," remarked Sarah, as the door of the limousine closed, and Michael sprang to his seat. Nora had noticed with surprise that no direction had been given to the chauffeur.

"Yes, I should like to know very much," she said, politely.

"Well, we're going to the Bermuda steamer. Your aunt and uncle are sailing this morning, and they want you to see them off."

Nora gave a great gasp and sank back in her seat. Her aunt and uncle! Who in the world were they? Oh, why hadn't Kathleen told her about them? It would be interesting to go on board a big ocean steamer, but the thought of meeting more new people was rather terrifying. What if this uncle and aunt were to discover that she wasn't Kathleen? The very thought made her heart beat fast, and she felt suddenly cold and frightened. But whatever happened, she must "play her part" till the end. If, through any fault or mistake of hers, she should be the means of bringing trouble upon her mother, she could never be happy any more. So, for the second time that morning, she made a desperate effort to look pleased.

"It will be fun to go on a ship," she said in a voice that trembled slightly, "but I hope it won't take very long. You see, I must go for Muriel Trevor"

Sarah did not answer. She seemed interested in looking out of the window. The car was whirling them rapidly down Fifth Avenue, where the big shops were just opening. It was a beautiful morning, and the air and sunshine, combined with the rapid movement of the car, were beginning to have an exhilarating effect on Nora. After all, it was not likely that these new people would take very much notice of her, she reflected. Kathleen had said nobody cared much about her except her daddy. It was certainly delightful to be bowled along in the big limousine, for those were the days when motoring was a comparative novelty, and until yesterday Nora had never been in an automobile in her life. So she decided to enjoy the present moment to the full.

The ride to the pier was not a very long one, but it was all new and interesting. Nora had never been in that part of the city before, and as the car turned from one crowded street into another, she leaned forward in her seat, her eyes round with excitement.

"I didn't know there were so many people in New York," she told Sarah. "Do you suppose everybody is out in the street this morning?"

But Sarah did not appear particularly interested.

"It's Saturday morning," she said, "and none of the children are in school. That's why we see so many."

At last the car drew up at the entrance to a long pier, and they both got out. There were a great many people on the pier, all apparently bound for the Bermuda steamer, and Sarah grasped her charge's arm firmly.

"Keep tight hold of me," she commanded. "If we once get separated in this crowd, we might never get together again. Oh, thank goodness, there's Mr. Carew!"

Nora had no idea who Mr. Carew might be, but she followed the direction of Sarah's glance and saw a gentleman beckoning to them from the deck of the steamer. "I wonder if he's the uncle," she said to herself, "but there doesn't seem to be any aunt with him."

The question was speedily settled by Mr. Carew himself, whose greeting, as they stepped from the gangplank on to the deck, was a cheery —

"Hello, Kathleen! here you are. You'll find Aunt Kitty in her cabin; number seventeen. I'm waiting here to make sure all the luggage is put on board."

"He's got a nice face," reflected Nora, as she followed Sarah along the deck, and down the companionway to the saloon. "I'm sure I should like him, but I don't suppose I shall ever see him again after this morning."

The Bermuda boat was not very large, but to Nora—who had never been on board any vessel

larger than a ferry-boat—it seemed almost palatial. She was rather glad they had come, for it would be so interesting to tell Mummy all about it. Mummy had been to Europe when she was a girl, and knew about ocean steamers, but she was always interested in everything Nora had to tell her.

They were making their way along a narrow passage, with little rooms on each side, when, somewhere in the distance, a gong sounded. Nora paused in sudden alarm.

"What's that for?" she inquired, anxiously.

"To warn the people who aren't sailing to go on shore," Sarah answered.

"Then hadn't we better go?"

Sarah laughed.

"Goodness no," she said. "Why, you haven't even seen your aunt yet. You wouldn't come all this way for nothing, would you?"

"Oh, no," said Nora, with forced cheerfulness; "only—only, if we shouldn't get off in time —"

At that moment they reached number seventeen, and Sarah tapped at the door. Some one called "Come in," and they entered a large, comfortable stateroom, where a very pretty young lady was unpacking a suit case. At sight of Nora and Sarah, the young lady looked up, with a smile.

"Well, here you are!" she said. "What do you think of the ship, Kathleen?"

She had a bright, pleasant manner, but it struck Nora that she was more interested in the stowing away of her belongings than in the arrival of her supposed niece.

"It's lovely," said Nora, rather hurriedly, "but I think we'd better say good-bye right away. There's a gong ringing, and Sarah says it's to warn the people who aren't going to get off."

"Oh, there's plenty of time," said Mrs. Carew, easily; "they always begin sounding that gong ages too soon. Would you mind helping me a little, Sarah? I decided at the last moment to leave Celestine at home; she's such a wretched sailor. I think I had better get my night things out at once, for I'm sure to be sick as soon as we pass Sandy Hook."

Sarah complied, and Nora—still feeling a little anxious and uncomfortable—sat down on the sofa.

"I'm sorry you don't feel well," she said, sympathetically. "Perhaps you'll be better after the ship starts."

Mrs. Carew laughed.

"No such luck," she said. "The last time I went abroad I scarcely lifted my head from my pillow during the entire voyage."

"How dreadful!" exclaimed Nora. "I shouldn't

think you'd ever want to go on a ship again, if it makes you so ill. There's that gong again. Don't you really think Sarah and I had better go?"

"Don't worry about that gong," said Mrs. Carew a little impatiently. "Come here and help me fold some of these things."

Nora did not like to refuse, but she was not at all easy in her mind, especially as neither Mrs. Carew nor Sarah appeared to be particularly in a hurry.

"Here's some candy," said Mrs. Carew, producing a large box of Maillard's from her suit case. "You may have it if you want it. A friend sent it to me. Imagine any one being so foolish as to send such a wretched sailor as I am candy to eat on a sea voyage."

"Oh, thank you!" cried Nora, her face brightening. "I love chocolates, and I hardly ever——" She was going to say, "hardly ever have any," but stopped herself just in time.

At that moment the sound of a long, shrill whistle fell upon their ears. Nora gave a violent start.

"What's that?" she demanded in sudden terror.

"Only the siren. We're just—— Ah, here's Uncle Stephen; he'll explain."

"Well, we're off," remarked a cheerful voice,

and Mr. Carew came into the cabin, looking as calm and unperturbed as if the bottom hadn't suddenly fallen out of Nora's world.

"Off!" shrieked Nora, with a sudden rush towards the door; "but we mustn't—oh, Sarah, come quick! The steamer's going to start!"

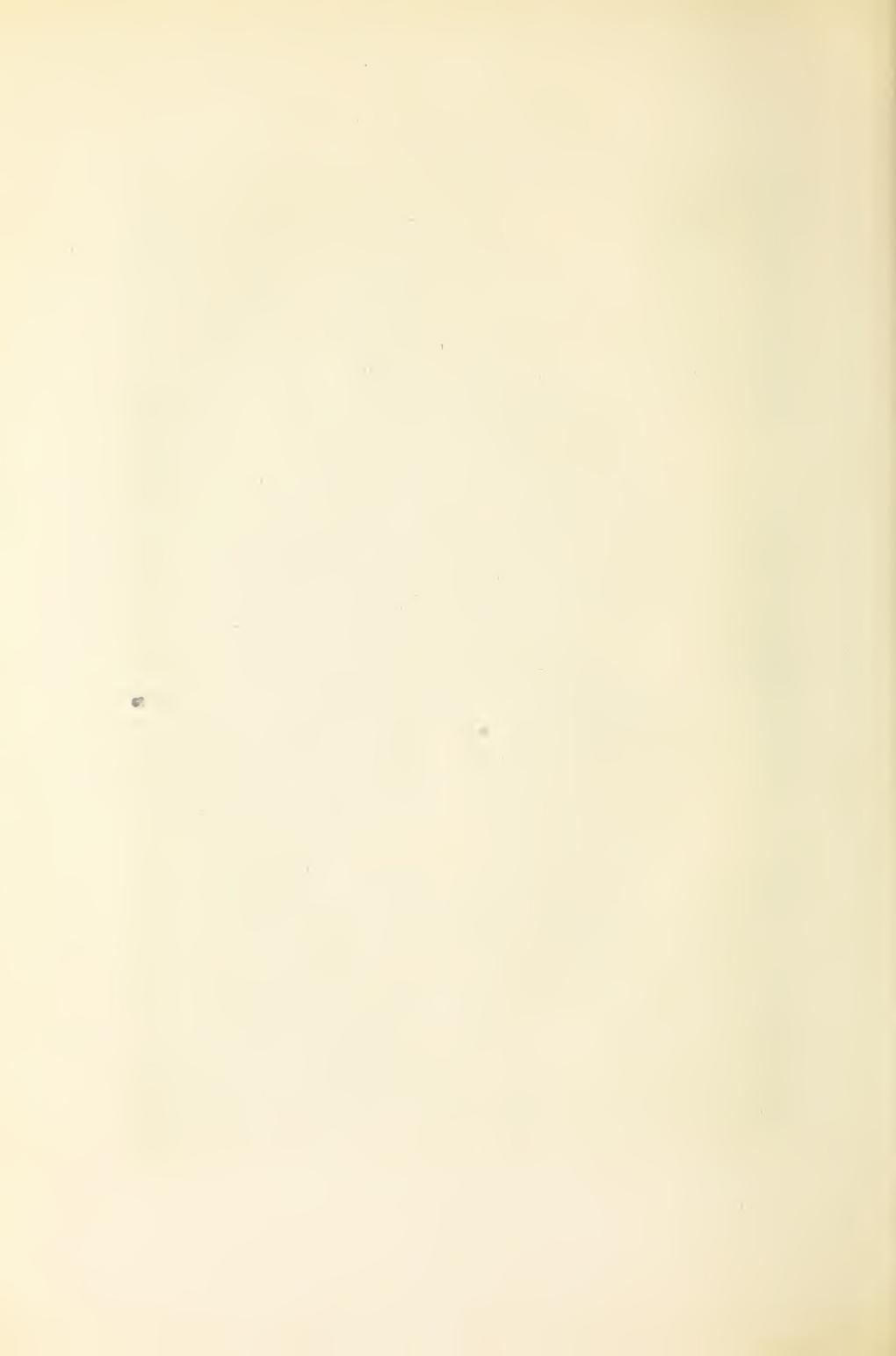
She tried to dash past Mr. Carew, who was blocking the doorway, but he caught her and held her fast. Both he and his wife were laughing heartily.

"Why, Kathleen, you little goose!" cried Mrs. Carew, "don't look so frightened. Don't you understand? It's a surprise. Your daddy planned it, and we all thought you would love it. You are not to get off at all. You and Sarah are going to Bermuda with us."



"OH, SARAH, COME QUICK! THE STEAMER'S GOING TO START!"

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CHAPTER VIII

KATHLEEN RECEIVES A SHOCK

WHEN Kathleen awoke that morning in her strange surroundings, it was with somewhat mixed sensations. She lay, with eyes still half closed, recalling the events of the previous evening. They all seemed much more like things one remembers in a dream than any waking reality. It had all been wonderful, and she had been happier than she could ever remember being in her life, but at the same time it all seemed very strange and unreal. There was the dinner, for instance, so different from dinner at home. When she innocently inquired if it were the cook's day out, her mother had smiled, and told her that there wasn't any cook, and that she and Nora did all the housework themselves. She had always supposed that every one had at least one maid, unless they were people of the servant class, like Sarah and Selma. The thought that her mother and sister might belong to that class was not altogether agreeable, but a glance at Mrs. O'Neil's sweet, refined face, reassured her on that point, and she resolved to tell

Daddy about it, and ask him to send a servant at once to her mother and Nora. Daddy had never refused her anything, and she was sure he would not refuse her this.

She had sat in her mother's lap for a long time after dinner, and although they had neither of them talked very much, it had been very beautiful. Later, when she was in bed, her mother had knelt by her bedside, with such a strange, wonderful look in her eyes.

"I believe you love me as much as Daddy does!" Kathleen had said, wonderingly, and her mother had answered very softly, "Indeed, indeed I do, my darling." And when she had fallen asleep at last, her mother's hand was fast clasped in hers.

But now it was morning, and things were beginning to look a little more commonplace. She remembered that there was no bathroom connected with the studio, for one thing. It would not be comfortable to dress without her morning bath. The thought of a cold sponge in a tin foot-tub did not appeal to her, and she decided to omit her usual ablutions that morning, even if her mother should object, as Sarah frequently did. Then there was the question of breakfast. She did not like the idea of not only eating but cooking breakfast in the room where one had slept all night. To be sure, the studio was large and airy,

and when Nora had described the life there, it had sounded quite fascinating. But Kathleen had been accustomed to every luxury since she could remember, and somehow the reality did not seem as attractive as she had pictured it in her imagination.

It was very quiet, and Kathleen wondered if her mother were still asleep. She was just opening her eyes, with the intention of finding out, when the door opened, and Mrs. O'Neil, already dressed, even to a hat and a long ulster, came in, laden with parcels.

"Why, Mother," gasped Kathleen in astonishment, "you haven't been out already, have you?"

"Yes, indeed I have," said her mother, smiling. "I went to buy some things for breakfast. I hoped you wouldn't wake until I got back."

"What sort of things?" inquired Kathleen in a tone of deep interest.

"Rolls and fresh eggs, and a jar of marmalade."

Kathleen was sitting up in bed now, looking a good deal puzzled.

"I didn't know people went out to buy things like that," she said. "I thought men always brought them to the basement door."

Mrs. O'Neil laughed.

"Well, you see, we haven't any basement door," she said, "so we have to do our marketing

ourselves. We don't always have eggs and marmalade for breakfast, but this is a very particular occasion. I don't have my little Kathleen with me every morning, you know." Mrs. O'Neil's voice trembled, and although she was still smiling, there were tears in her eyes.

Kathleen was deeply impressed.

"It seems very queer," she said, slowly. "I never thought of eggs and marmalade as being a treat. We have them every morning at home."

"I know you do, darling. Now would you like to get up, and dress, while I get breakfast, or shall I bring it to you in bed?"

Kathleen said she would rather get up. She did not even object to the tin tub, when her mother filled it from the tap in the hall. She was very quiet all the time she washed and dressed. Something was troubling her, and Kathleen was not used to being troubled.

"I suppose Nora dresses herself without any help," she remarked, when, after several unsuccessful attempts to button her boots, she was forced to apply to her mother for assistance.

Mrs. O'Neil was forced to admit that Nora did.

"I'm afraid I'm a very stupid person," said Kathleen, with a sigh. "Sarah says I'm the most helpless girl of my age that she ever saw. I think I'll ask her to teach me to do more for myself. Perhaps she'll like me better then."

There was a quiver in Kathleen's voice, and her mother bent forward impulsively, and kissed the sober little face.

"Oh, my darling!" was all she said, but Kathleen felt suddenly that she was being understood as no one had ever seemed to understand her before.

It all seemed much like a picnic to Kathleen, but it was a very pleasant picnic. It was very interesting to watch her mother's manipulations with the tiny gas stove, on which the eggs were boiled, and the coffee made, and when breakfast was over, she requested to be permitted to aid in the dish-washing, which the evening before she had only watched from a distance.

"It's really great fun," she announced, rubbing a cup so vigorously with the dish-towel that her cheeks tingled from exertion. "I think I shall go down to the kitchen sometimes and help Ellen. You know it was Ellen who brought Nora into the house that Sunday. She never found out it wasn't me. I met her on the stairs the other day, and she laughed, and whispered that she hoped I appreciated her not telling any one about my going out alone. I never supposed any two people, even if they were twins, could look quite so much alike. Why, even Nora's clothes fit me just as well as if they were made for me. I don't like them much, though; the boots are so thick, and

I hate darns in my stockings. Are all Nora's stockings darned?"

"I am afraid they are," said Mrs. O'Neil, sadly. "I am sorry to say Nora is rather hard on her clothes."

"So am I," said Kathleen. "Sarah says she never saw any one so careless about her clothes as I am. And just as soon as they begin to need mending Mrs. Anderson gives them away, and buys me new things. Aunt Kitty hates old clothes, too. Do you know Aunt Kitty?"

"No, dear."

"She's Daddy's sister, but she's ever so much younger than Daddy, and awfully pretty. She used to live with us, and lots of young gentlemen wanted to marry her. I've heard people say she was a great belle. She's married to Uncle Stephen Carew now, and they have a house on Seventy-second Street. Aunt Kitty and Uncle Stephen are going to Bermuda to-day. I wish they would take me with them, for Daddy is there, you know, and I do miss him so dreadfully."

"You love your daddy very dearly, don't you, Kathleen?" Mrs. O'Neil said, softly.

"Of course I do, and he loves me, too, better than any one else in the world. There, I think that cup must be dry. Shall I put it away on the shelf with the others? O dear! I've knocked



"YOU LOVE YOUR DADDY VERY DEARLY, DON'T YOU, KATHLEEN?"

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down a plate. I hope it isn't broken. It is, though. Oh, I'm so sorry!"

"Never mind, darling; I'll pick up the pieces. You might cut your fingers. Now, suppose you go and look at Nora's books. You may find something you will enjoy reading while I make the beds and tidy up the studio."

Kathleen retired somewhat crestfallen, but she was destined to still further humiliation.

"Why, Mother," she cried, after a short examination of the pile of school-books on the table, "does Nora study algebra and Latin?"

"Yes, dear, she began Latin in the autumn, and she has just commenced algebra."

"She must be very clever," said Kathleen, reflectively. "I hate arithmetic, and I don't know a word of Latin. I can speak French, though, and play the piano a little, too," she added more hopefully.

"I am so glad, dear; I wish I could hear you play. Your father and I were both so fond of music, and he had a glorious voice."

Kathleen's cheeks grew suddenly hot.

"Daddy is my father," she said, decidedly; "I don't want to hear about the other one."

She was sorry the moment the words were uttered, for the look of pain on her mother's face touched a chord of sympathy, which nothing had ever touched before. She was not by any means

a hard-hearted child, but it had simply never occurred to her to consider any one's feelings but her own. Mrs. O'Neil said nothing, however, but went quietly on with her work, and Kathleen wisely decided that it would be better not to continue the subject.

"I wish I hadn't said that about my other father," she told herself regretfully. "I wouldn't have hurt my mother's feelings for the world, but of course nobody could ever take Daddy's place. It's very interesting here, and Mother is a darling, but I don't think I should like to live in one room, and do housework all the time. I wonder how soon Nora will come."

That was a question destined to be asked many times during the next two hours. It was asked not only by Kathleen, but by Mrs. O'Neil as well, and as the morning wore away, and still no Nora appeared, the mother's face grew very grave and anxious.

"I cannot understand it at all," she said at last, when the hands of the clock pointed to half-past eleven, and nothing had happened. "Nora is so conscientious, and she knows how anxious I must be."

"Perhaps there was something the matter with the car," suggested Kathleen, "or perhaps Sarah wouldn't let her go out alone. O dear! I do wish she'd come! I was going to take Muriel to

the theatre this afternoon, to see 'The Little Princess.' You don't suppose Nora is staying away on purpose, do you? It's very nice at my house, and perhaps she thinks she would like to stay longer."

"I am quite sure Nora is doing nothing wrong," said Mrs. O'Neil, and there was so much sharpness in her tone that Kathleen regarded her mother in astonishment.

"Why, I believe you can be cross, too," she said innocently, at which remark Mrs. O'Neil pulled herself together with an effort and tried to laugh.

"I am afraid I am a cross little mother," she said, apologetically, "but I am so worried about Nora. I did very wrong in consenting to the plan. If anything happens, it will be all my fault."

"No, it won't," protested Kathleen, "it will be all mine. I said I wouldn't go, and you were afraid I had convulsions when I cried. I don't think I ought to have said that about convulsions. I did have them when I was teething, Daddy says, but I've never had any since. I didn't mean to frighten you, but you see, I never had a mother before, and it seemed as if I just couldn't go away so soon."

There was a catch in Kathleen's voice, which ended in a sob, and, with a pang of remorse, Mrs.

O'Neil gathered the little girl in her arms and hugged her.

At one o'clock Kathleen announced that she was hungry, and her mother—who, in her growing anxiety, had forgotten all about luncheon—hastened to prepare a simple meal of bread and milk. Kathleen was not fond of bread and milk, but was too polite to say so, so she swallowed the food in silence. Mrs. O'Neil herself was, by this time, far too anxious to eat a mouthful.

"Kathleen darling," she said suddenly, "would you mind very much being left alone for a little while? I must go and find out what is keeping Nora."

"I won't mind," said Kathleen, readily. "I'm used to staying by myself, when Mrs. Anderson and Sarah are out, but don't stay any longer than you can help, and be sure to bring Nora back. I want my own clothes, and I think I'd like to go home."

"I will do what I can," her mother promised, and five minutes later she was hurrying downstairs, her heart heavy with anxiety and remorse.

It was very quiet in the studio after Mrs. O'Neil had gone out. Kathleen tried to read, but in a few minutes she threw down her book, and gave herself up to reflections. She wished she had not insisted on spending the night with her mother,

and changing places with Nora. Mother was very sweet and dear, but she did not look happy, and it did seem strange what could have become of Nora. After all, it might have been wiser to have gone home, and said nothing to any one till Daddy came back from Bermuda. Daddy was so good, she was sure he would not have refused to let her see her own mother, when he knew how much they wanted each other. Dear, dear Daddy! how she missed him! Nobody in the world could ever take his place; not even her newly found mother. As for that other father, who loved music, and had a glorious voice, she would not even think about him.

Kathleen's reflections were cut short by a knock at the door, and in answer to her "Come in," a girl of about her own age presented herself. The girl wore a red dress, and a hat of the same color, while a large pair of gold earrings hung from her ears. Kathleen stared at this unexpected intruder in undisguised astonishment, but the intruder herself did not appear at all disturbed.

"Hello!" she remarked cheerfully. "I met May Judson on the stairs, and she told me you were in, and your mamma was out."

"How do you do?" said Kathleen, not knowing what else to say. "Won't you sit down?" she added, with a sudden recollection of the laws of hospitality.

The girl complied, after having first removed her hat and jacket.

"O dear!" thought Kathleen in dismay, "she's going to stay, and I haven't any idea who she is, or what I ought to say to her. What shall I do?"

"I guess you know what I've come to talk about," said the visitor, when she had established herself comfortably on the sofa.

"No, I don't," answered Kathleen, bluntly.

The girl flushed, and bit her lip with annoyance.

"Oh, yes, you know all right," she said; "it's about that composition. I think you're real mean about it, and so does Papa. I told him last night, and he says if you'll fix it so I win a prize, he'll let you choose anything you want in the store."

"What is it you want me to do?" inquired Kathleen, curiously.

"Oh, don't pretend to be so silly. You know perfectly well. All I ask is that you'll help me write that horrid composition, and I really think you might."

"Oh, but I couldn't; I couldn't really!" cried Kathleen, quite forgetting her character for the moment. "I hate compositions."

"You hate composition!" repeated the visitor in a tone of withering scorn. "That's a nice way to talk, isn't it? You've written the best compo-

sition in school this year, and you know it, too. I'd be ashamed of myself to tell such fibs. I shall tell Papa about you, and I guess he won't let you have any presents out of his store."

"I don't want any presents out of your father's old store," cried Kathleen, indignantly. "My daddy gives me all the presents I want. I can't help you with your composition; I don't know how, and I wish you'd go away, and leave me alone."

At that moment the door opened for the second time, but without the ceremony of knocking, and two children—a little girl and a little boy—walked into the room with the air of being very much at home there.

"Oh, Nora," began the new girl, "Jimmy and I came to see if we could stay with you for a while. Mrs. Flinn's cleaning our flat, and she told us to keep out of the way. Papa and Mamma are at the show, and we thought perhaps you'd tell us stories."

"Tell you stories!" gasped poor Kathleen, in growing bewilderment. "Why, I can't; I never told anybody a story in my life. Oh, I do wish you'd all go away and not bother."

May Judson's blue eyes opened wide in amazement, and her brother Jimmy gave vent to his feelings in a long whistle, but Lina Rosenbaum was the most indignant of the party.

"Just listen to her!" she scoffed, turning to the Judsons. "That's the way she's been talking to me. She says she hates writing compositions, when everybody knows she just loves it. She's the biggest story-teller in New York, that's what she is."

"She is not a story-teller," declared Jimmy, his little face reddening with anger. "If you say that again, Lina Rosenbaum, I'll—I'll hit you."

Jimmy doubled his small little fist as he spoke, and shook it menacingly at Lina. Kathleen was conscious of a sudden little thrill of admiration. This was the first time in her life that she had ever been championed by any one. For the moment she quite forgot that it was Nora and not herself for whom the boy was standing up. Lina turned towards the door.

"I'm going," she announced, haughtily. "I don't intend to stay in a place where I'm treated like this. You just wait and see when I ever ask you to do anything for me again, Miss Nora O'Neil. And as for you, you two little—" Anger choked her, and she flounced out of the studio, banging the door behind her.

Kathleen gave a sigh of relief, but her troubles were not yet over, for the two other visitors still remained standing in the middle of the room, staring at her in round-eyed astonishment.

"You didn't really say it, did you, Nora?" inquired May, incredulously.

"Say what?" faltered Kathleen.

"That you hated writing composition. You told her you wouldn't help her write one yesterday, but that wasn't the reason."

"I—I don't know what I said," stammered poor Kathleen. "I didn't tell a story, anyway, and I'm glad that boy said I didn't. Oh, won't you please go away? Mother's out, and I don't know what to say to you."

And, to the great astonishment of the Judsons, the supposed Nora burst into tears.

To have their friend in tears was more than the devoted Judsons could endure. They were both at her side in a moment, and May's small, impetuous arms were round her neck.

"Oh, Nora dear, please don't cry," she implored. "We won't bother you; we'll go right away, but—but you never acted like this before. Are you sick? Oh, I hope it isn't scarlet fever. Mamma says scarlet fever's much worse than measles."

"Please don't squeeze me so tight," expostulated Kathleen, with difficulty extricating herself from May's embrace. "You're very kind, but I'm afraid you don't understand, and I can't explain. May be Mother'll tell you. Oh, here she comes! I'm so glad. Mother, won't you please explain? They think I'm Nora, and — Why, Mother, what is the matter?"

Mrs. O'Neil had dropped into the chair by the door, and was shaking from head to foot. She was very pale, and there was a strange, frightened look in her eyes. Kathleen sprang to her mother's side, and caught one of the cold hands in hers.

"Mother, oh, Mother dear, what is it?" she cried in sudden terror. "Has something awful happened? Is Nora dead?"

Then Mrs. O'Neil found her voice, but it was in a very low, tremulous voice that she answered.

"No, no, darling, nothing so terrible as that, but I have had a great shock. They have carried Nora off to Bermuda. The ship sailed this morning."

"To Bermuda!" shrieked Kathleen, everything else forgotten in the shock of this news. "To Daddy! They took her instead of me, and she let them—she didn't tell! And I wanted to go to Bermuda more than anything else in the world!" And Kathleen cast herself upon the floor, and wailed as loudly as if she had been two years old instead of twelve.

Mrs. O'Neil sank back in her chair, and covered her face with her hands. She was a rather helpless little woman at times, and the present crisis was more than she felt herself capable of meeting. Jimmy and May continued to stare in speechless amazement. It was Jimmy, however, who was

the first to recover from the shock. Jimmy, like all boys, hated scenes.

"Get up, Nora," he commanded, approaching the prostrate Kathleen; "don't howl like that. You're making an awful noise, and your mother's crying, too. Oh, I say, Nora, what is it all about, anyhow?"

Then Kathleen lifted her head, and proclaimed the truth to her astonished companions.

"I'm not Nora," she cried, indignantly. "Nora's gone to Bermuda, to my daddy. He doesn't want her; he wants me. Oh! Oh! Oh!" Another prolonged wail completed the sentence.

"You're not Nora!" gasped Jimmy. "Then—then, who are you?"

"I'm Kathleen Crawford," cried the little impostor; "I'm Nora's twin sister."

CHAPTER IX

NORA GOES TO SEA

“**I**MUSTN’T tell, oh, I mustn’t tell ! If they find out it will get Mummy into dreadful trouble.” That was what Nora had been telling herself over and over again for the past five minutes, as she lay in a little disconsolate heap on the cabin sofa, while Mr. and Mrs. Carew and Sarah all seemed to be talking at once. They were all angry, she was sure, she could tell that from their voices, but how much more angry would they be if they knew they were carrying off the wrong little girl.

In the first moment when Nora had realized that the ship had actually started, she had forgotten everything else, and, with a piercing scream, had tried to reach the door, with a wild idea of somehow making her way back to the shore. But Mr. Carew had held her fast, and, with a gentle shake, had laughingly told her not to be a little goose. She was going to her father in Bermuda ; it had all been planned for a wonderful surprise. Then suddenly, the full meaning of the situation

had burst upon Nora, and she had flung herself on the sofa, and cried, and cried as if her heart would break.

" You certainly are a most unaccountable child, Kathleen," scolded Mrs. Carew. " Here we have all been planning this, ever since last week, when your daddy's letter came, telling us to bring you. We thought we were going to give you the surprise of your life, and now here you are crying as if something dreadful had happened. I really cannot understand you at all."

" She's contrary," said Sarah ; " nobody ever knows what's going to please her. Come now, Miss Kathleen, stop crying, and behave like a sensible child. If Miss Joy or Miss Gladys had ever had such a beautiful surprise planned for them, I guess they'd have known how to appreciate it."

Nora made a great effort to check her sobs. After all, these people meant to be kind. They had expected to give Kathleen a wonderful pleasure. If Kathleen had been there in her place, she would doubtless have been very happy. Oh, if she could only tell them the truth ; they might manage somehow to send her home, but the memory of her mother's words checked the rising impulse, and again she repeated the old refrain : " I mustn't tell, oh, I mustn't tell ! "

" It—it was all so sudden," she faltered, lifting

her head from the sofa cushions, and straightening her hat, which had fallen on one side. "I—I didn't want to go to Bermuda. I wanted to—to take Muriel Trevor for an automobile ride."

Mrs. Carew laughed in spite of her annoyance.

"You silly child," she said. "As if that mattered. Sarah telephoned the Trevors yesterday afternoon, and Muriel was told all about the surprise. She thought you would be wild with joy at the prospect of going to Bermuda."

"But she was mistaken—you were all mistaken!" cried Nora, lifting her big pleading eyes to Mrs. Carew's smiling face. "I don't want to go to Bermuda. I can't possibly go; there's a reason why I can't. Oh, please, please make them stop the ship for a minute. I must get off, I really must."

"Oh, Mr. Captain, stop the ship, I want to get off and walk," sang Mr. Carew, his eyes twinkling with fun. "I'm sorry the grand surprise has turned out a failure, Kathleen, but I am afraid you will have to make the best of it. This boat won't stop again till she gets into Bermuda harbor day after to-morrow."

Nora sank back on the sofa with a little moan. She looked so frightened, and so utterly miserable, that Mr. and Mrs. Carew began to feel really sorry for her.

"I am afraid the surprise was too much of a

shock," Mr. Carew remarked in a low tone to his wife. "The poor child is quite bowled over."

"I can't understand her at all," said Mrs. Carew. "I was sure she would be out of her head with joy. Come, Kathleen dear," she added kindly, "don't look as if you had lost your last friend. You will spoil the whole trip for us all if you don't cheer up. Let Sarah take you to see your cabin; it's just across the gangway."

Nora rose slowly. She was very white, and words still came with difficulty, but at that moment she was making the biggest effort of her life.

"I'll try not to spoil your trip," she said, "and—and I'm sorry you were disappointed, but you see, you don't understand."

"No, I certainly don't understand," said Mrs. Carew. "Haven't you been fretting for your daddy ever since he went to Bermuda, and didn't you write him a letter begging him to send for you? It was that letter that decided him to let you come with us. He told us to make all the arrangements, and not to let you know what was going to happen until you were actually on the boat. You once told him you loved surprises, and he wanted to give you one you would never forget."

"And such a time as I had keeping you from suspecting anything," chimed in Sarah. "That was why I sent you out with Selma yesterday

afternoon. I did most of the packing while you were gone, and got the trunks sent off to the ship. I did have a turn when I heard you tell Selma you wanted to put on that dress you wore at the birthday party, for it was down at the very bottom of that trunk."

Nora gave a long sigh. It was all quite plain and simple, of course, and if she had only been Kathleen, she would have been very happy, and very grateful to these kind friends, who had been planning to give her pleasure. But she was not Kathleen; she was only little Nora O'Neil. Kathleen was at the studio with Mummy, and she was being rapidly carried away from home and friends. But whatever happened, she must not get Mummy into trouble; she must keep on playing her part just as long as she possibly could. So she made no objections to being led away by the still indignant Sarah, to another cabin, very much like the one she had left, which Sarah told her they were to share during the voyage.

"I guess we'd better stay here till I get things straightened out a little," remarked the maid. "It's sure to be rough as soon as we pass Sandy Hook, and I'm never any good after the ship begins to roll."

Nora sat down, and meekly folded her hands. There really didn't seem to be anything else to

do. She felt utterly helpless. Every moment was taking her farther from her mother, and yet she dared not utter another word of protest. Nora was only twelve, but she had always been an independent, resourceful little person, and was, in many ways, old for her age. She loved her mother with all the strength of her warm little Irish heart, and it seemed to her that anything—yes, anything in the world—would be better than to let Mummy suffer from any fault or mistake of hers.

Sarah's voice broke in on her reflections.

"I wish to goodness they'd told you all about it in the beginning," grumbled Sarah. "I'm sure I'd have been glad enough to stay on in New York, for if there's one thing I do hate more than all others, it's being on a ship when it's rough. And I've always heard this Bermuda trip was about the roughest there is."

"What happens when it's rough?" inquired Nora, listlessly. She didn't really care very much what did happen; she was so utterly miserable already.

"People get seasick," said Sarah, shortly.

Nora asked no more questions, and in a few minutes Mr. Carew came to ask if she would not like to go on deck with her aunt, while Sarah finished her unpacking.

Without a word, Nora rose and followed him.

She had decided that the wisest plan would be to do exactly as she was told. Then no one could be angry with her, and perhaps they would leave her alone, and not ask embarrassing questions.

The deck was crowded, and all the passengers were chatting and laughing, as if they were thoroughly enjoying themselves. It was a lovely morning, and the fresh sea air and bright sunshine did much to restore Nora to herself. They were still going down the Bay, and as they stood by the railing, gazing out over the beautiful harbor, Mr. Carew pointed out the different forts, and was so kind and pleasant that she began to lose some of her terror of her new surroundings. After all, this was a most exciting adventure, and Nora had never had many adventures. Mrs. Carew had joined some acquaintances, but in a few minutes she came up to her husband and Nora, accompanied by a lady and gentleman.

"Here are Mr. and Mrs. Starr, Stephen," she said. "You remember meeting them at Bar Harbor last summer. Isn't it delightful to find them on this boat?"

Mr. Carew agreed that it was very delightful, and shook hands with Mr. and Mrs. Starr. Then Mrs. Carew turned to Nora.

"This is my brother's little girl," she said; "we are taking her to join her father in Bermuda."

Mrs. Starr smiled kindly at Nora, and then she

glanced over her shoulder, as if in search of some one.

"I am looking for my boy," she said; "he was here a minute ago. Henry, dear, where do you suppose Reggie has gone?"

"I haven't an idea, but he is sure to turn up all right," answered her husband, laughing. "He can't very well swim ashore, so I wouldn't worry about him if I were you."

Mrs. Starr did not look altogether satisfied.

"We have had such a bother with Reggie," she explained to Mrs. Crew. "He simply hated to leave New York. I have never left him in his life, and I simply wouldn't leave him this time, so his father and I insisted on his coming. But I am afraid it was very much against his will."

"Not unlike my little niece," said Mrs. Carew, and she launched forth on an account of the wonderful surprise, and its disastrous results. She had just concluded her story, and Mrs. Starr was remarking that one never could count on what children would do, when they were joined by a boy of twelve or thirteen, whose sober, rather sullen expression of countenance certainly did not convey the idea that he was having a good time.

"Oh, here is Reggie," exclaimed Mrs. Starr in a tone of relief. "Reggie darling, here is a nice little girl for you to play with. What is your name, dear?"

Nora gave a little frightened gasp. She had never told a lie in her life, and yet if she said that her name was Nora O'Neil, what would the Carews think? Fortunately, however, the question was settled for her by Mrs. Carew, who, attributing her hesitation to some new, unaccountable shyness, answered promptly—

"Her name is Kathleen Crawford."

Reggie—who evidently had good manners, even if he did look rather sulky—stepped forward and held out his hand.

"How do you do?" he said, frankly. "Do you like going to that beastly Bermuda?"

"No, I don't like it at all," returned Nora, with equal frankness, and the two children were friends from that moment.

"Let's go and see the pilot get off," suggested Reggie, and, although he still looked rather cross, Nora noticed that his face had brightened perceptibly. It was a rather nice face, too, she decided, and there was a great relief in talking to some one who did not know Kathleen. At least she could be herself with this boy, and not fear making mistakes. So she made no objection to accompanying her new acquaintance to where quite a crowd had collected to see the pilot leave the ship.

"We're at The Hook now," Reggie explained. "We shall be out at sea in a little while, and then I suppose it'll begin to be rough."

"Does it make you seasick when it's rough?" inquired Nora, remembering Sarah's fears on that subject.

"Not a bit. I never was seasick in my life, and neither was Father. Mother has a bad time of it, though. I can't see why she wanted to come." And Reggie's face clouded again at the recollection of past troubles.

"I've never been to sea," said Nora. "Does it hurt very much to be seasick?"

"I guess not, or people wouldn't keep on going. Mother's always sick, and she's crossed the ocean fourteen times. I've been to Europe three times, and one winter we went to Egypt."

"How very interesting," said Nora. "I didn't know Americans ever went there unless they were missionaries, or people like that. I thought it was only the people in the Bible who went to the Land of Egypt."

Reggie laughed. He was beginning to find this new acquaintance most amusing.

"I suppose you're thinking of Moses and The Children of Israel," he said. "They did live there, of course. Why, I saw the place on the Nile where Moses was found in the bulrushes. I saw the pyramids, too, and the Sphinx. A little English kid and I got lost on the desert once."

"Oh, do tell me about it!" cried Nora, to whom an exciting story was as the very breath of life,

and Reggie, nothing loath, plunged into a thrilling tale of how he and a little English girl had run away from their nurses, one afternoon when staying at a hotel close to the great pyramids, and gone to pay a visit to the Sphinx. They had been lost on their way home; had made friends with some children in an Arab village, and after wandering about for several hours, and at last falling asleep in the sand of the desert, had been rescued by some Englishmen who were out on a hunting expedition, one of whom was the father of "the English kid," as Reggie called his little companion. "That was four years ago," Reggie concluded, "and I was only eight, but I wasn't much scared, except just for a minute when I thought those gentlemen were Arabs, and might be going to shoot us."

"You must be very brave," said Nora, and there was so much admiration in her tone that Reggie—who was really quite a modest boy—blushed. "But how can you travel so much in winter?" Nora added. "Don't you go to school?"

"Oh, yes, but you see Mother's always having nervous prostration, and whenever she feels an attack coming on, the doctor sends her away somewhere, and Father and I have to go with her. I rowed a lot about coming this time, but Mother wouldn't hear of leaving me at home, and

when she began having nervous attacks, Father said there wasn't any help for it, and I must come along. The Easter holidays begin next Thursday, and we're only to be away three weeks, so I won't have to lose much school this trip."

"Do you like school?" Nora inquired, politely.

"Not much, but I like being on the baseball team. I only got taken on this term, and I hate to miss the games. We play every Saturday."

At that moment Nora caught sight of Sarah bearing down upon her.

"I've been looking all over the ship for you, Miss Kathleen," she said, reprovingly. "You mustn't run off with strange boys; don't you know that?"

"I'm not a strange boy," declared Reggie, indignantly. "My mother knows her aunt. We came over here to see the pilot get off, and he hasn't gone yet. Don't you bother. I'll look after her all right."

"You needn't," said Nora, flushing; "I can look after myself; I always do."

"You do, do you?" said Sarah. "Well, this is the first time I've heard it. Come right back with me to your uncle and aunt. They're in their deck-chairs, and they've engaged two for us."

Nora would have much preferred remaining where she was. She liked this pleasant, frank-faced boy, with whom she could talk naturally,

without the constant fear of making some terrible mistake, which would betray her as a little impostor. But she dared not disobey the stern Sarah, so, with a sigh of regret, she turned to follow the maid back to the rest of her party.

"What a disagreeable person," remarked Reggie in a low voice. "Do you have to mind her?"

"I don't believe she means to be disagreeable," said good-natured Nora. "She's afraid she is going to be seasick, and that makes her crosser than usual."

"I know," said Reggie, with a comprehending nod. "They're apt to be like that when they think they're going to be sick. Mother begins to get nervous the minute the ship starts, and a nurse I had when I was a kid always thought she was going to die. But see here, if she's sick, she won't be able to boss you around, and we can have some fun together."

Nora's face brightened.

"Will you tell me some more of your adventures?" she asked, eagerly.

Reggie said that he would, but felt obliged to admit that the Sphinx adventure was by far the most exciting experience he had ever had. By this time they had reached the part of the deck where the Carews and Starrs were settled in their steamer-chairs.

For the next hour Nora was chained to Sarah's

side. Reggie went away with his father, but did not ask her to accompany them, and the little girl spent the time trying to accustom herself to her strange situation. Having recovered from her first shock, she was beginning to find a good deal that was interesting in the adventure. All her life she had longed to travel ; to see places and people she had read about ; and now here she was, actually on a ship bound for Bermuda. If it had not been for the thought of her mother's anxiety, and the fear of not being able to "play Kathleen," she felt she would be almost enjoying herself. But every time she let her thoughts wander back to Mummy a lump would rise in her throat, and she would have to wink hard to keep back the rising tears. Everybody was kind to her, in an easy-going, indifferent sort of way, but, remembering Kathleen's instructions about not talking much, she merely answered questions, and made no voluntary remarks. This was really very hard, when there were so many things she wanted to talk about, and she wished that Reggie would come back, and they could be together again. Reggie was the only person on board with whom she could be at her ease, and free from the dread of being found out.

The steamer was by this time well out at sea, and was beginning to rock quite perceptibly. Nora rather enjoyed the motion, but not so her

companions. Mrs. Carew and Mrs. Starr both departed for their cabins, and Sarah turned pale and leaned back in her chair with closed eyes.

"Don't you feel well, Sarah?" Nora inquired, sympathetically.

Sarah shook her head.

"I'm afraid I can't hold out much longer," she said, faintly, "but you mustn't be left here all by yourself."

"I'm not by myself," said Nora, looking very much surprised at the idea. "There are lots of people here. What could possibly happen to me?"

"I don't know, I'm sure," admitted Sarah, "but it's the looks of the thing. Your father is so particular."

"Then I suppose I shall have to go down to the cabin with you," said Nora, regretfully. "I wish I could stay here, though; it's so lovely. But perhaps I can help you if I go with you."

Sarah looked the astonishment she felt.

"Well, now, that's real sweet of you," she exclaimed in a tone of such warmth that Nora wondered why her perfectly natural suggestion should be so much appreciated. "I don't need any help, though," she added. "All I want is to lie down. I'd leave you with your uncle, but he's gone off to the smoking saloon."

"Here come Reggie Starr and his father," said

Nora, eagerly ; " perhaps they'll let me stay with them." And, somewhat to Sarah's consternation, she sprang from her chair, and ran to meet the approaching figures.

" Oh, Reggie," she cried before the maid could stop her, " Sarah's beginning to be seasick, and she wants to go and lie down. She says I can't stay here by myself, so, please, may I stay with you ? "

" Of course you may," said Reggie, and Mr. Starr added kindly to Sarah :

" We will look after the little girl with pleasure until her uncle comes for her."

So the matter was settled ; Sarah took a prompt departure, and Nora spent a very pleasant half-hour with her new friend. Reggie proved a most interesting companion, for, delighted at finding such an admiring listener, he told stories of other voyages he had taken, and of his experiences in foreign lands, until Nora almost forgot that she was " playing a part." But even with Reggie there were embarrassing moments, as, for instance, when he suddenly inquired if she didn't know the Campbells.

" No, I never heard of them," answered Nora, innocently.

" Oh, don't you ? I thought you and Marjorie might be friends. She and Bobby are in Bermuda, and we're going to meet them. Their

uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. Allen, took them. They've both had diphtheria, and couldn't go back to school till after Easter. Bobby and I are great chums."

Nora said nothing, and just at that moment Mr. Carew came to look for his supposed niece, and take her to luncheon.

By this time the steamer was rolling so heavily that many of the passengers had retired to their cabins, but neither Nora nor Reggie were troubled by qualms of seasickness, and Nora ate such a hearty luncheon that Mr. Carew looked at her in astonishment.

"You are a famous little sailor, Kathleen," he said, as they left the dining-saloon. "Now what would you like to do next? Shall I take you on deck again?"

"I think I'd better go and see how Sarah is," said Nora. "Perhaps she may need me to take care of her."

Mr. Carew laughed.

"Since when have you developed a talent for nursing?" he inquired, but he did not seem to expect a reply, and Nora, fearing she had made another mistake, was glad to escape.

She found Sarah very miserable indeed, and not only Sarah, but Mrs. Carew as well.

"If I could only manage to get my hair down and my boots off," moaned poor Aunt Kitty. "I

almost wish I had brought Celestine, after all, even if she isn't much use. The stewardess is so busy, there is no use in ringing for her. I have rung three times, and no one has answered. I felt so badly when I came down that I just threw myself on the bed, without trying to undress, and I am getting worse every minute."

"Oh, do let me help you!" cried Nora, and, without waiting for permission, she was on her knees, unbuttoning Mrs. Carew's walking boots.

Ten minutes later Aunt Kitty was comfortably in bed.

"Thank you, dear," she murmured feebly, as Nora bent over her to arrange the pillows. "I had no idea you were such a good little nurse."

"I like nursing," said Nora. "I helped take care of the Judsons when they had the measles."

She stopped, aghast at her mistake, but Mrs. Carew did not appear to have noticed anything unusual.

"I think I'll try to sleep for a little while," she said. "You had better get Sarah to take you on deck."

And Nora departed, only too thankful to have escaped so easily, and secretly resolving to be more careful of her words in future. But she was only twelve, after all, and mistakes were bound to occur. Had it not been for the fact that both Mrs. Carew and Sarah were far too ill to notice small

things during the next twenty-four hours, Nora would never have reached Bermuda without betraying her identity. Mr. Carew was kind, but rather absent-minded, and except at meals, he saw little of Nora, whose time was divided between ministering to his wife and Sarah, and walking the deck with Reggie Starr.

"She's an awfully jolly girl," Reggie informed his father that first evening. "There isn't a bit of nonsense about her. You'd never suppose she'd been spoiled and given in to, the way Mrs. Carew told Mother she had. She's just as pleasant and good-natured as she can be, and not one bit stuck-up, or anything like that."

"I never was so mistaken about a child in my life," was Sarah's inward comment, the next morning, when Nora stood at her bedside, with a cup of steaming black coffee, which she had ordered from the steward. "It just shows one shouldn't judge. She's the best-hearted little thing that ever lived. Even Miss Joy couldn't beat her."

But Sarah—who did not approve of flattering children—kept her conviction to herself.

CHAPTER X

NORA ARRIVES IN BERMUDA

IT was Monday morning, and the little steamer was just entering Bermuda Harbor. Most of the seasick passengers had recovered, and were beginning to appear on deck for the first time since Saturday noon. Many of the ladies still looked pale, for the trip had been a rough one, but every one was happy at the thought of landing. Mrs. Carew and Sarah had not yet appeared on deck, but Nora and Reggie had been up since six, and were eagerly watching the approaching shore.

"It's the loveliest place I ever dreamed of!" exclaimed Nora, with shining eyes. "Oh, Reggie, why didn't you tell me how beautiful it was?"

"I didn't remember it very well," Reggie admitted. "You see, I was only nine when we came last time. It is pretty, though, isn't it? Did you ever see such blue water? And it's so clear you can almost look down to the very bottom of the sea. There's the hotel we're going to; that big one, with all the people on the piazza. Do you suppose your father is looking for you?"

Nora gave a violent start, and all the eager brightness faded suddenly out of her face. In her wonder and excitement over the beauty of Bermuda Harbor she had, for the moment, quite forgotten what was going to happen next.

"I—I don't know," she faltered, almost in a whisper.

Reggie regarded her curiously.

"Won't he be glad to see you?" he inquired, bluntly.

"I don't know. I wish I hadn't come. I wish I could fly right back to New York this minute." There was such genuine distress—not to say terror—in Nora's face, that Reggie stared at her in amazement.

"Why, I thought you loved it!" he exclaimed. But before Nora could give any explanation of her remarkable words, they were joined by Mr. Carew.

"There's your daddy on the pier, Kathleen," he said. "See; he's looking for us. Wave your handkerchief to him."

Nora gave a great gasp, and following the direction of Mr. Carew's glance, she caught sight of a tall gentleman, standing on the end of the pier eagerly scanning the steamer's passengers. Mechanically, she took out her handkerchief and waved it feebly, and at the sight the gentleman's face lighted up with an expression of such joyful

recognition that Nora's heart gave one bound, and then seemed to stand quite still.

"He thinks I'm Kathleen," she said to herself, "and he loves her; oh, he must love her very much to look like that." And all at once, the thing she was doing seemed a very dreadful thing indeed.

"I'm not Kathleen, I'm Nora O'Neil!" The words were actually on her lips, but then, like a flash of lightning, came the memory of her mother, and she resolutely choked them back. What would happen if Mr. Crawford ever learned the truth she did not know, but it was sufficient that her mother had confided to her a great secret, the revealing of which might bring untold trouble. Whatever happened, she must continue to play her part until she was either found out, or received some word from Mummy. So, with a mighty effort, she conquered the wild impulse to run away and hide somewhere—anywhere so that she might not see that glad, loving smile on the face of Kathleen's daddy—and ten minutes later she was following Mr. and Mrs. Carew down the gang-plank.

A good many people had come down to the boat-landing, many of whom were greeting friends and relatives, who had arrived by the steamer. Every one was talking and laughing, and there was considerable confusion, but Nora scarcely

noticed it. There was a strange roaring sound in her ears, and her teeth were chattering. She was afraid to look at the crowd of faces on the pier; afraid to see again that bright, welcoming smile. As she stepped from the gangplank she stumbled, and would have fallen if some one had not caught her. The next moment she felt herself held in strong arms, while a kind, tender voice was saying —

"Why, my little Kathleen, what is it? Are you ill? Aren't you glad to see Daddy?"

And there was the kind, handsome face bending over her, only now the look of glad expectancy had changed to one of puzzled anxiety.

She tried to speak, but the words would not come, and in another second Mr. Crawford had set her on her feet, though he still kept a protecting arm about her, and had turned to greet Mr. and Mrs. Carew.

"What's the matter with her?" he inquired anxiously. "Has she been very sick?"

"She hasn't been sick at all," answered Mrs. Carew. "She's a famous little traveler. You should have seen —" But Mrs. Carew did not complete her sentence, for her brother had already turned back to Nora.

"What is it, then, darling?" he asked, and there was so much love and anxiety in his tone that Nora felt the last vestige of her courage

ebbing away. "Won't you tell Daddy all about it?"

Then Nora did what was, perhaps, under the circumstances, about the wisest thing she could have done; she began to cry.

"I—I don't think I feel very well," she sobbed; "I think I'd like to lie down somewhere."

"Poor kiddie!" exclaimed Mr. Crawford; "she is feeling the effects of the voyage. People do sometimes, when they haven't been seasick at the usual time." And, without another word, he lifted Nora in his arms, and strode rapidly away with her, in the direction of the hotel omnibus.

Nora closed her eyes, and let her head rest against Mr. Crawford's shoulder, with a feeling of infinite relief. For at least a few moments she was safe; she would be quiet, and not try to keep up her part, which had suddenly become so hateful to her. She did not speak once until they had reached the hotel bedroom, where Mr. Crawford gently deposited her on a sofa.

"She will be all right in a little while," she heard some one say. "People are often seized with a sudden giddiness after a rough voyage. Just lie still for a little while, Kathleen dear, and you will be as well as ever in half an hour. Daddy will be back in a few minutes; he is only going to speak to Aunt Kitty and Uncle Stephen."

Nora felt a kiss on her forehead, and then the

door closed, and she was alone with Sarah, who was bustling about, unpacking the suit cases.

"Now you just smell these salts, Miss Kathleen," commanded Sarah, approaching the sofa with a small bottle, which she promptly applied to Nora's nose. Nora coughed, gasped, and sat up.

"I don't like it; please take it away," she pleaded. "It's horrid stuff; it makes my eyes sting."

Sarah laughed, and withdrew the smelling salts to a safer distance.

"Of course it stings," she said; "that's what does you good. How do you feel now?"

Nora would have liked to say that she was very ill indeed, but truth compelled her to admit that she felt decidedly better.

"I thought so," said Sarah. "Better keep quiet a little longer, though. My goodness! what a blessing it is to feel the solid earth under one's feet again. Well, we're here, and I suppose everybody's satisfied, though I must say I don't think very much of this surprise business myself."

"I don't either," agreed Nora, in a tone of heartfelt conviction. "Did they think Kath—I mean I was going to like it?"

"Of course they did; they thought you'd be wild with joy. I must say I thought the same at first, but we were all mistaken. That's one of the

troubles with spoilt children ; nobody ever knows what's going to please them."

"Am I—do you think I am a spoilt child ?" Nora asked, curiously.

Sarah laughed again.

"Well, what do you think about it yourself ?" she said. "I won't say a word, for you really have been as good as gold ever since we left New York. You didn't like the surprise, but you didn't make half the fuss I expected you would. What beats me is why you always pretended you couldn't do a thing for yourself. I didn't suppose you could even put on your own shoes and stockings."

Nora did not answer, but her cheeks grew suddenly crimson, and she turned her face to the wall. There was a short silence, which Sarah was the first to break.

"There's one thing, Miss Kathleen," she said, "and that is we're here for the next three weeks, and you might just as well make the best of it, and try to have a good time. It's a beautiful place, anyhow, and your papa planned the surprise because he thought it was going to give you pleasure. It would be a pity to disappoint him now, wouldn't it ?"

Nora thought of the kind face that had bent over her so tenderly, and her conscience smote her. After all, if she had to continue to be Kath-

leen, there was no reason why Kathleen's father should be made unhappy. Perhaps he loved his little girl just as much as her mother loved her. Suppose Mummy had planned a wonderful surprise for her pleasure, and she had not liked it at all. What a disappointment it would have been.

"I shall have to pretend I'm enjoying myself," she reflected. "I guess it will be about the hardest thing I ever had to do in my life. Oh, I do hope Mummy isn't worrying very much about me, and that she and Kathleen are happy together. When we get back home, and have changed places again, Mr. Crawford mustn't think Kathleen was ungrateful and horrid."

So, when Mr. Crawford returned a few minutes later to inquire for his little daughter, Nora was able to force a faint smile, and to assure him, in a rather tremulous voice, that she was "ever so much better." But, although somewhat relieved by this assurance, Mr. Crawford did not look altogether satisfied. Nora felt his keen glance searching her face anxiously, and her heart began to beat fast with sudden apprehension. What if Kathleen's father were to discover that she was only a little impostor!

"I'm sorry I was so silly," she said, humbly, as Mr. Crawford sat down beside her on the sofa. "I didn't mean to be ungrateful, but you see, it was such a very sudden surprise. I thought—I

thought—oh, please don't be unhappy about it!" And Nora's tears burst forth afresh.

"My dear child, I am not unhappy about anything. Whatever put that idea into your head?" Mr. Crawford's tone was very kind, but he was looking more puzzled and worried than ever. "I thought you would enjoy the surprise, but I am afraid we all made a big mistake. Aunt Kitty tells me you were quite upset when you found you were on your way to Bermuda."

"Oh, I'm so sorry, so very sorry!" sobbed Nora. "Please forgive me, and I'll try to enjoy myself, indeed I will!"

"There, there, don't cry, pussy," soothed Mr. Crawford, kissing her. "You are tired and nervous, that is all. Mrs. Anderson wrote me you were not well, and that was one reason why I sent for you, but you are going to be all right soon, and you have no idea what delightful times we are going to have. Your friends, the Campbells, are here, and crazy to see you. Now suppose you come with me for a little walk while Sarah unpacks. The air will do you good, I am sure."

Nora rose obediently. She felt as though a weight had been lifted from her shoulders. Puzzled as he was, it was evident that Mr. Crawford did not suspect the truth, and, after all, there was something very attractive in the prospect of taking a walk in Bermuda.

"I should love to go," she said, and five minutes later she and her tall companion had started on what proved to be by far the most interesting walk Nora had ever taken in her life.

It was a very different child who came bounding into the hotel bedroom an hour or so later. There was a bright, excited color in her cheeks, and her eyes were shining as Sarah had never seen them shine before.

"It's the most beautiful place in the world!" she announced, breathlessly. "I didn't suppose there was any place quite so beautiful except Heaven. The water, and the sky, and the flowers! You never saw such flowers. There are lilies, beautiful Easter lilies, growing right out in people's gardens. Oh, Sarah, never mind about that old trunk. Come out and see it all."

"I'll go for a little walk this afternoon," said Sarah, calmly. "I've seen pretty places before. I went to Florida with one family I lived with, and to California with another."

"I don't believe any other place could possibly be so beautiful as this," declared Nora. "If only Mother could see it!"

Sarah was quite touched.

"Your mamma is in a much more beautiful place, I'm sure, dear," she said, kindly, at which well-meant remark Nora suddenly recollected herself, and blushed scarlet.

By way of changing the subject, she approached the bed, on which Sarah had spread a number of garments from the trunk she was unpacking.

"Oh, what a lovely dress!" she exclaimed involuntarily. "Am I really to wear it?"

Sarah paused in her work, and stared at her charge in amazement.

"What ever are you talking about?" she demanded, sharply. "As if you hadn't worn that dress to dancing-school at least a dozen times!"

"I—I didn't think what I was saying," stammered Nora, and then she went over to the window, and stood with her back to the astonished Sarah, hoping that the fresh sea-breeze would cool her burning cheeks.

"Oh, what shall I do?" she asked herself despairingly. "I keep forgetting, and saying things I shouldn't, every minute. If I keep on at this rate they'll find out long before we get back to New York. I've got to keep remembering I'm Kathleen, not Nora, and it's terribly hard work. I wish I knew a little more about the things Kathleen likes to do. It would be dreadful if I said I loved something that they all knew she hated. I guess the best way will be not to say any more than I can help about things. When Father was acting Mummy says he forgot everything else except his part. I'm not an actress, but I hope I can be one when I grow up, and if I play this part

well, perhaps it will be a help to play real ones some day. It's going to be terribly hard, and I know I could never possibly keep it up if it wasn't for Mummy's sake."

At that very moment, Mr. Crawford was saying to his sister, Mrs. Carew —

"She looks well, I admit, rather better than I expected from Mrs. Anderson's letter, but there is something seriously wrong with the child. I haven't yet found out what it is, but I shall watch her closely, and if she hasn't improved decidedly within the next two or three days, I shall consult a doctor about her. Her expression puzzles me."

Mrs. Carew smiled good-naturedly.

"My dear Duncan," she protested, "you really are absurd about that child. I assure you she is perfectly well, and has never behaved better in her life than she has done since she recovered from the first shock of your grand surprise. I really don't see why you worry so much over trifles."

"Kathleen is the dearest thing I have in this world," answered her brother, gravely. "It is only natural that I should be anxious about her when I feel sure there is something seriously wrong."

CHAPTER XI

NORA BECOMES INVOLVED IN DIFFICULTY

LUNCHEON was over—a wonderful luncheon, at which Nora had been treated to so many strange, new dishes, that she began to feel more strongly than ever that she must be living in a fairy tale. She had never before even known of the existence of such things as “lobster à la Newburg,” “chicken à la king,” and “peach Melba.” And now they had gone out on the piazza, where many of the hotel guests had already assembled, to listen to the orchestra, and bask in the soft sea-breeze and glorious sunshine. Nora was enjoying herself as she would not have believed possible a few hours earlier. She stood by the piazza railing, letting the wind blow her curls about her face, and listening to the gay march, with which the musicians had begun their afternoon concert. Mr. Crawford and the Carews were chatting with friends. Nora was just beginning to wonder what had become of Reggie Starr, when she caught sight of him approaching in her direction, accompanied by another boy of about his own age and a girl possibly a year or two

older. All three were talking excitedly, and Nora had an uncomfortable conviction that she, herself, was the subject of their conversation. She gave Reggie a welcoming smile, but to her surprise it was not he but the strange girl who was the first to address her.

"Kathleen Crawford," she began, pausing in front of Nora, and regarding her with flashing eyes, "I want to know something! Did you tell Reggie Starr on the ship that you didn't know Bobby and me?"

She was a tall girl, and there was such a determined, masterful way about her, that Nora instinctively shrank back against the railing.

"I don't know; I—I don't think I did," she faltered.

The girl turned indignantly to Reggie, who was looking red and uncomfortable.

"What did she tell you, Reggie?" she demanded, sternly. "You asked her if she knew us, and what did she say?"

Reggie did not answer, but moved uncomfortably from one foot to the other, and glanced helplessly at Nora.

"Oh, shut up, Marjorie!" protested the other boy, who was evidently Marjorie's brother. "What's the use of making a row about nothing?"

"It isn't nothing," maintained Marjorie, her voice beginning to tremble. "Would you think

it was nothing if somebody who was your best friend only a month ago told another person she didn't know you?"

"Oh," cried Nora in genuine distress, "I'm so very sorry. Did you really think—I mean am I really your best friend?"

Marjorie turned away, in wrath almost too great for words.

"Come, Bobby," she commanded; "we don't want to talk to people who don't want to know us." And she flounced away, followed by her brother. But Reggie remained standing by Nora's side.

"I say!" he burst out indignantly, "what made you tell me you didn't know the Campbells? I didn't mean to get anybody into trouble, but I was talking about you, and Marjorie said you were her best friend, and I was so surprised that, before I thought, I'd blurred out what you said about not knowing them. I'm awfully sorry."

Nora clasped her hands.

"I know it sounds dreadfully queer," she said, "but you don't understand, and I can't possibly explain. I don't wonder that girl thought I was horrid."

"Well, it was all your own fault, if she did," said Reggie, bluntly. "I suppose you've had a row, and didn't want to know her any more, but you needn't have told a fib about it."

"I didn't!" cried Nora, her quick, Irish temper rising at the accusation. "I never tell fibs. I wouldn't do such a thing."

"I don't know what you call the thing you said, then," maintained Reggie, whose temper was as quick as Nora's. "You told me you didn't know the Campbells, and Marjorie Campbell says you were her best friend only a month ago. Maybe you call it just imagination, but it's ——"

Reggie did not finish his sentence, for, with a stifled sob, Nora had turned and fled.

She hurried on, blindly, through the open door, along the hotel corridor, scarcely noticing in which direction she was going, until she nearly collided with a lady and gentleman, who had just come out from one of the card rooms.

"Hello!" exclaimed the gentleman, laughing; "why in such haste, young lady? By Jove, I believe it's the little Crawford girl, isn't it, Ruth?"

"To be sure it is," said the lady. "Don't you remember us, dear? Marjorie Campbell's uncle and aunt. You came with Marjorie to have tea in our studio one day last winter."

"Did I?" gasped Nora. "At least I mean—I mean——" She paused in such evident distress that her new acquaintances both felt rather sorry for her.

"Never mind, dear," said the lady, kindly. "I suppose you go to so many places, and meet so

many people, that it isn't easy to remember everybody. We heard from your father that you were expected, and Marjorie has been so happy at the thought of having you here. Have you seen her yet?"

"Yes," said Nora, in a very low voice, and then she added desperately—"Will you please excuse me? I want to go to my room, but I don't know where it is."

"What is your number?" Mrs. Allen asked, but Nora—who had not noticed the number on the door—could not tell her.

"Then I am afraid we shall have to go to the office to inquire," Mrs. Allen said, and she was so kind that Nora did not like to object. She was longing for solitude, but solitude was not to be had just then, for on their way to the office they met Mr. Crawford, who was coming to look for her.

"Where have you been, Kathleen?" he asked, when he had greeted Mr. and Mrs. Allen. "I thought I saw you talking to Marjorie Campbell on the piazza."

"I wanted to find my room," Nora explained, humbly, "but I didn't know where it was, and the lady said it had a number."

Mr. Crawford looked very much surprised.

"Of course the rooms are numbered," he said. "Surely a little girl who has been in as many hotels as you have cannot have forgotten that."

Nora said nothing. Until that day she had never been inside of a large hotel in her life, but how could she explain that to Kathleen's father? Mr. Crawford, however, did not appear to expect an explanation, or, if he did, he said nothing about it, but he led the way back along the corridor, to the room where Nora had left Sarah before luncheon.

"I have ordered a boat for four o'clock," he said, pausing outside the door. "It is just three now. Will you stay here with Sarah until I come for you? I think a little rest will do you good."

"Yes, I'd like to rest," said Nora, eagerly. "I hope Sarah has gone out, though. She said she might go for a walk this afternoon. I think I should like to be alone by myself for a little while."

Mr. Crawford looked at her long and earnestly. Then he took her hand, and laid his finger gently on her pulse.

"I am afraid you are feverish, Kathleen," he said, anxiously. "Are you sure your head doesn't ache?"

"Oh, no, not a bit; I feel very well indeed!" declared Nora. "I'm always well, you know. I was never ill except when I had the measles."

"And bronchitis, and malaria, and a few other things," said Mr. Crawford, smiling. "I am afraid you are not quite as well as you want me

to think, little girl. Your pulse is too quick, and your cheeks are flushed, but perhaps if you rest for an hour, you will be all right. If Sarah has gone out, and you want anything, you must ring for the chambermaid." And with these words, and a promise to return in an hour, Mr. Crawford left her, and went back to the piazza, where he sat for the next twenty minutes, trying to fix his attention on the news in the *New York Times*, which had arrived by the steamer that morning, but with thoughts far away from the printed page before his eyes.

Sarah had evidently carried out her intention of going for a walk, for the room was empty, and, with a sigh of relief, Nora closed the door, threw herself into the nearest chair, and clasped her forehead in both hands.

"It's perfectly awful," she said to herself. "I don't believe any other girl was ever in quite such a dreadful scrape before. I shall never be able to keep on playing a part for three whole weeks; even Father didn't have to do that. At least a real actor has some time when he can just be himself. But I've got to try just as hard as ever I can, for Mummy's sake."

The thought of her mother recalled another thought; there was something she must do at once. She had heard some one say that the steamer would leave for New York on Wednes-

day morning. It would carry the mail, of course, and she must somehow manage to get a letter to her mother. If Mummy did not know where she was, or what had happened, how terribly frightened she must be. She reflected, however, that this was scarcely likely, for when she had failed to appear at the studio on Saturday, it was only natural to suppose that Mummy had made some effort to find out what had detained her, and if she or Kathleen went to the Crawfords, the whole situation would have been quickly explained. She hoped Kathleen would not be very angry, and, oh, above all things, she hoped and prayed that her twin sister would be willing to stay at the studio until she could get back to New York and change places. But even if her mother knew where she had gone, she would still be very anxious; of that Nora felt sure. The only possible way of relieving their anxiety was to send a letter as quickly as possible. She glanced about the room ; saw with relief that there were writing materials on the table, and two minutes later, she was writing away as if her very life depended on it.

"DARLING MUMMY:

"I have only got such a little while to write, and there is so much to tell you. I am in Bermuda at The Princess Hotel, and everybody thinks I am Kathleen. I suppose you have heard

how they carried me off on the ship, before I knew anything was going to happen. It was to have been a great surprise for Kathleen, and perhaps she would have liked it, but I was never so frightened in my life, and I don't think I have quite left off being frightened even yet.

"Every one is very kind, and tell Kathleen I don't wonder she loves her daddy. I am sure I should love him, too, if I wasn't so terribly afraid of his finding out. Oh, Mummy, it is terribly, terribly hard to keep people from finding out I am not Kathleen, and I keep making mistakes all the time. A boy on the ship asked me if I knew some people named Campbell, and I said 'No' because of course I didn't, but it seems I ought to have said 'Yes' because they are great friends of Kathleen's, and the girl is very angry with me. Of course I can't explain, and I am afraid it is going to be very disagreeable.

"There are so many puzzling things that I wish I could talk to you about. It seems so wicked and deceitful to call Mr. Crawford 'Daddy,' as Kathleen does, but if I didn't he would think it so queer, and perhaps his feelings would be hurt. I try to keep thinking of Father, and of how you said he used to live in his parts. I am trying to live in my part, but it is much harder work than I ever supposed anything could be. I am going to keep on trying just as hard as I can, though, only we are not to go home for three weeks, and that does seem a terribly long time to be another person instead of yourself. The minute I get back to New York I shall manage to slip away somehow, and, oh, how happy I shall be to see you, and to

change back into your own Nora again. I used to think it would be so wonderful to be rich, and have lovely clothes, but it isn't. If I could only be safe at home with you again this minute, I wouldn't care one bit how shabby my dresses were. It's so worrying to have a secret that you mustn't tell any one, and to be afraid all the time that you're going to be found out.

"I hope you and Kathleen are very happy together. I know Kathleen is ; she couldn't help it, being with you. Please don't worry any more about me than you can help, for I am perfectly well, and it is very beautiful here. I would like to write you all about it, but I am afraid Sarah will come in and ask questions, so I guess I had better stop. The steamer is going back to New York on Wednesday, and this is Monday afternoon. I will post this letter just as soon as I can do it without any one's seeing me.

"With all the love I have in my heart, and ten thousand kisses, I am,

"YOUR OWN NORA O'NEIL.

"P. S. Tell Kathleen I will be very careful with all her things, and try not to make any more mistakes than I can possibly help. I am glad you have her for a little while ; it seems only fair, but I am afraid it will be very hard for her to have to give you up, and go back to Mr. Crawford, for, although he is very nice indeed, of course there is nobody in the world half as dear and precious as you.'

Nora folded her letter, and, having sealed and

directed the envelope, began a hasty search for a postage stamp. But alas! no stamps were included in the hotel supply of writing materials, and she suddenly remembered, with a pang of dismay, that she did not possess a single penny with which to buy one. This was a new and unlooked-for difficulty. If she asked Mr. Crawford or Sarah to post her letter, they would naturally notice the address, and ask awkward questions. To ask Kathleen's daddy for money appeared an equal impossibility. Her proud, independent little mother had impressed upon her that to accept money from a stranger—even the smallest sum—was a thing never to be thought of for a moment. Of course Mr. Crawford was not exactly a stranger, and the circumstances were certainly unusual, but still —

She was pondering this question when the opening of the door caused her to hastily slip the letter into her pocket.

“Ready, Kathleen?” said Mr. Crawford’s pleasant voice, and his keen, kind eyes scanned Nora’s flushed face anxiously.

“Oh, yes, thank you, I’m quite ready. I’ll get my hat.” And Nora flew to the closet, where she was rather startled by the number of hats which met her view. Sarah had finished her unpacking before going out, and the closet was full of pretty clothes.

"I wonder which hat I'd better put on," said Nora, pausing in uncertainty before the well-filled shelf.

"It doesn't matter; wear any one you like," Mr. Crawford answered absently. "You are sure you feel better, Kathleen?"

Nora assured him that she felt quite well, and having decided upon a jaunty shade hat, which struck her as particularly "stylish," she followed Mr. Crawford out into the corridor.

"The Campbells are coming with us," Mr. Crawford said, cheerfully. "Aunt Kitty is tired, and Uncle Stephen has letters to write, so I asked Mr. and Mrs. Allen and the two Campbells to join our party. Marjorie didn't seem very keen about going at first, but her aunt persuaded her. What's the trouble, Kathleen? Have you and Marjorie been quarreling again?"

"Oh, I'm so very sorry about it," said poor Nora, the tears starting to her eyes. "It isn't her fault. She's angry about something I said to Reggie Starr on the ship. I didn't mean to be horrid, but she doesn't understand. Do you think I could make it all right if I apologized?"

Mr. Crawford looked both surprised and pleased.

"I am sure you could," he said, heartily. "Marjorie is very fond of you, notwithstanding your many disagreements, and you have no idea

how much pleased she was when she heard you were coming to Bermuda."

Nora's heart was beating very fast when they reached the piazza, where Mr. and Mrs. Campbell, and their nephew and niece, were waiting for them. Marjorie still looked very much aggrieved, and greeted her supposed friend with an air of haughty indifference. With a desperate determination to do her best to make amends for her unintentional slight, Nora walked straight up to the injured one, and held out a trembling hand.

"I'm dreadfully sorry about—about what I said to Reggie Starr," she began, humbly. "Will you please forgive me?"

Marjorie Campbell's blue eyes opened wide in astonishment. Never before, in all their many quarrels, had Kathleen been known to offer an apology, or even to admit having been in the wrong.

"I suppose I shall have to forgive you," she said rather grudgingly. "I can't see what in the world ever made you say it, though. It was a fib, you know, an awful fib, and even if I forgive you, I don't see how I can ever forget."

At the mention of the word "fib," Nora had flushed indignantly, but before she could speak, Mr. Crawford—who had been watching the little scene with considerable interest—hastened to interpose.

"Come along, children," he called pleasantly; "this way for the glass-bottomed boats. You must keep your eyes wide open this afternoon, Kathleen, for you are going to see some very interesting things."

CHAPTER XII

REGGIE POSTS A LETTER

"**I** REALLY think Bermuda is a rather jolly place, after all," Reggie Starr spoke in a tone of satisfaction, as he stretched himself comfortably on the warm sand of the South Beach, and gazed lazily out over the blue, blue water.

"It is pretty nice," Bobby Campbell admitted, "especially the donkeys and the swimming. The glass-bottomed boats are rather fun, too, but still, I like the Adirondacks better, don't you, Kathleen?"

It was Tuesday afternoon, and the two Campbells, Reggie and Nora, had all come over to South Beach, chaperoned by Sarah, and Marie, the nurse of Mrs. Allen's two-year-old baby, who was also of the party. Three donkey carts had been secured for the occasion, and the ride to the beach had been a very pleasant one. And now they were comfortably established on the sand, the donkeys having been tied in the shade to await their return, while the drivers, three small Bermudian boys, went for a swim. At Bobby's question, Nora looked up with a start from the sand fort she was building for the small Percy Allen, who had taken a sudden and violent fancy to "Tathleen."

"I don't believe any place in the world can be nicer than this," she said, guardedly. "I never supposed anything could be quite so clear and blue as that water, and there are so many interesting things to do here."

"I like the Adirondacks best, though," maintained Bobby. "Don't you remember what fun we had that time Marjorie and I came to stay with you at Big Moose?"

"Don't talk to me just now," said Nora, hoping that nobody would notice her heightened color. "Percy and I are very busy; aren't we, Percy?"

"Es, us is," responded Percy, who was an adorable baby, and a great pet with both his cousins. "Don't 'sturb us, Bobby; Tathleen's 'musin' me."

Bobby laughed, and threw a handful of sand at his small cousin, but in a minute he went on with his reminiscences, though this time not directly addressing Nora.

"We did have fun that time at Big Moose. I sha'n't forget the day I caught that five-pound trout, or the time Kathleen went out in the canoe by herself, and it tipped over. It was a lucky thing she could swim."

"Kathleen can't swim," said Reggie, pausing in the act of making a comfortable sand pillow for himself. "She told me so on the boat."

"Can't swim!" cried Bobby, incredulously.

"Why, she swims like a fish. I never knew but one other girl who could swim as well as Kathleen, and she went out too far one day, and nearly got drowned."

Reggie cast a puzzled glance from Bobby to Nora, who was, to all appearances, completely absorbed in her sand fort. Marjorie—who was still feeling rather resentful, notwithstanding the olive branch—tossed her head, and remarked sarcastically—

"Seems to me Kathleen told a good many fairy-tales on the boat. Perhaps she was seasick, and it made her delirious."

Reggie reddened. He liked the supposed Kathleen much better than he did Marjorie, and he had no intention of getting his new friend into any further trouble if he could prevent it.

"Maybe I was mistaken," he said, carelessly. "Perhaps she said she couldn't swim. Wait a minute, Kathleen; I'm coming to help with that fort."

Nora said nothing, but the look she gave Reggie was a very grateful one. She had been in Bermuda for nearly two days, and it seemed to her as though her difficulties increased with every hour. So far she had succeeded in keeping her secret, but she was in constant terror lest some chance word or act might betray her, and the nervous strain was beginning to tell on her. More

than once she had caught Mr. Crawford's eyes fixed upon her with such a startled, troubled look in them, that she felt sure she must have said or done something which had struck him as strange or unusual. They had gone for a long drive that morning, and she had scarcely dared open her lips, for fear of making some mistake. Twice Mr. Crawford had asked her if she did not feel well, and she had seen him talking very earnestly with Mrs. Carew after luncheon, and felt an uncomfortable conviction that she had been the subject of conversation. She had hailed the prospect of going with Reggie and the Campbells to the beach as a great relief. At least for a couple of hours, she would be free from the watchful anxiety of Kathleen's daddy. But this respite had its limitations, for even with the Campbells she must be very careful.

But chief of all Nora's worries was the fact that she had not yet been able to procure the necessary postage stamp for her mother's letter. She was still carrying it in her pocket, and it was already Tuesday afternoon. So it was only natural that her thoughts should wander more than once from little Percy's sand fort, and that Bobby's remark about Kathleen's swimming should have added another to her many causes for anxiety.

When the fort was completed, and Reggie and Bobby had joined in a romp with the baby, in

response to that young man's peremptory demand —Marjorie, who considered herself too old for romps, had closed her eyes and pretended to be asleep. Nora strolled slowly away from the others, and began idly picking up shells. The shells were very pretty, but Nora scarcely noticed them. She was wondering what Mummy and Kathleen were doing at this very moment. But she had not gone far when she was recalled to her present surroundings by the voice of the faithful Sarah.

"Where are you going, Miss Kathleen?"

"Nowhere in particular," said Nora, coming to a sudden halt. "I thought I would just take a little walk. I won't go far."

"Come right back and sit down," commanded Sarah. "Your papa told me not to let you out of my sight. I can't tramp in this sand; it tires my feet, and you can just as well stay here with Miss Marjorie."

With a sigh, Nora returned to her seat, her hands full of the shells she had gathered. Marjorie yawned and opened her eyes.

"Oh, what lovely shells!" she exclaimed, admiringly, as Nora spread out her treasures on the sand. "I'd like to gather some, too, but it's too hot to move."

"Would you like these?" inquired Nora, eagerly. "If you would I'll sell them to you—I'll sell them for five cents."

Marjorie's eyes grew round with astonishment.

"Sell them!" she repeated incredulously; "sell those old shells! Kathleen Crawford, I really think you must be crazy. What in the world do you want to sell anything for?"

"Why, because I want the money, of course," faltered Nora, blushing. "There isn't any harm in selling things, is there? I only want five cents."

Marjorie burst into a peal of such genuine laughter that both the boys paused in their storming of the sand fort to inquire what was so funny.

"It's Kathleen," said Marjorie; "she wants to sell her shells for five cents, and she has a bigger allowance than all the rest of us put together."

"I haven't," protested Nora; "at least—at least I mean I haven't any money to-day, and I want five cents very much indeed. I don't like to borrow money, but I thought perhaps I could sell ——"

"Oh, don't be a goose, Kathleen," interrupted Marjorie, impatiently. "You always were a queer girl in some ways, but you've been positively weird since you came down here. If you want five cents why in the world don't you ask your father for it? You never had any trouble about asking him for things before."

"Then you won't buy the shells?" said Nora, with a catch in her voice.

"Of course I won't; I never heard of anything



"I WOULDN'T MIND BUYING THEM MYSELF, BUT FIVE CENTS
IS TOO CHEAP."—*Page 175.*

quite so silly. I don't want your old shells ; I can get plenty for myself."

There were tears in Nora's eyes, but she said nothing, and sat gazing down at the little pile of shells in her lap. Marjorie closed her eyes again, and for a few minutes nothing happened. Then little Percy, tired of being "stormed," was rescued by his nurse, and Reggie and Bobby returned to their former places in the sand.

"I say ! those are pretty shells," remarked Reggie, in a tone of would-be enthusiasm. "I wouldn't mind buying them myself, but five cents is too cheap. Won't you take a quarter ?"

Nora's cheeks were crimson, but the look she gave Reggie said more than words could have done.

" You are very kind," she said, " but I won't take more than five cents. If you'll take the shells for that, I shall be ever so much obliged."

" What in the world do you want to do with that five cents ?" demanded Marjorie, suddenly opening her eyes, and sitting up. Curiosity was getting the better of injured dignity.

" I want to buy a postage stamp," said Nora, simply.

" A postage stamp !" shrieked Marjorie, in a tone of such utter scorn and disbelief that more tears started to poor Nora's eyes. There was no use trying to explain ; every word she uttered

seemed only to make matters worse. But she had not counted on Reggie's championship.

"Oh, do shut up, Marjorie," he burst out, indignantly. "Suppose Kathleen does want five cents to buy a postage stamp with, I don't see that it's any of our business. People don't always have to tell things they don't choose to. Come along, Kathleen, let's go and look for some more shells."

Nora scrambled to her feet, hastily wrapping the shells in her handkerchief. Speech would not have been easy at that moment, but fortunately, it was unnecessary, for Reggie announced his intentions to Sarah.

"Kathleen and I are going for a little walk. I'll take care of her."

"Mind you don't go too far," warned Sarah. "Mr. Crawford's orders were that I wasn't to let Miss Kathleen get overheated, or tired."

Reggie promised not to go far, and the two children sauntered slowly away together. Marjorie, now fully awake, gazed after them, with a startled expression in her eyes.

"Bobby," she said in a low tone to her brother, as the other two passed out of ear-shot, "I believe there's something queer the matter with Kathleen. I'm rather scared about her."

"What is there to be scared about?" inquired Bobby. "She always was rather spoiled, you know. I don't see that she's much queerer than usual."

"I do," said Marjorie, solemnly; "she isn't the least bit like herself. If she wants a postage stamp, why in the world doesn't she ask her father or Sarah for it? And it isn't only that; she's been queer about lots of things ever since she came here. I asked her this morning if she had seen Sylvia Seymour since we came away, and she looked so queer, almost as if she didn't know what I was talking about. I asked her what the matter was, and she said nothing was the matter, and she hadn't seen 'that girl,' but her face was so red, and she looked dreadfully embarrassed. Think of her speaking of Sylvia as 'that girl,' when she's known her as long as I have. Do you suppose—it seems an awful thing to say, but do you suppose she can be losing her mind?"

"Bosh!" said Bobby, "of course she isn't. Maybe she's just pretending to be queer on purpose to get us excited about her."

Marjorie shook her head.

"I don't think so," she said. "Kathleen is spoiled, and rather hard to get on with sometimes, but she wouldn't do a thing like that. There was a girl at school who studied so hard that it affected her brain. She had to have a trained nurse, and go to a sanitarium."

"What became of her afterwards?" Bobby asked.

"She died," said Marjorie, solemnly. "Oh,

Bobby," she added, her voice beginning to tremble, "wouldn't it be awful if anything like that happened to Kathleen? I really am fond of her, you know, and the more I think of it, the more sure I feel she would never have told Reggie Starr she didn't know us if she'd been in her right mind. I'm going to tell Auntie Ruth about what I think, the minute I get back to the hotel, and she can tell Mr. Crawford if she thinks he ought to know."

"Well, perhaps it would be a good plan," agreed Bobby, "and, I say, Marjorie, let's be nice to Kathleen, no matter what she says. We'd feel so mean afterwards, you know, if we found she couldn't help it."

Meanwhile Nora and Reggie had walked some distance in silence. Nora was having trouble with her eyes, and Reggie, too polite to appear to notice, was feeling decidedly uncomfortable. He hated to see a girl cry. Kathleen was certainly the queerest girl he had ever met, but they had had some good times together on the boat, and he was genuinely sorry for her. It was Nora who was the first to speak.

"It was awfully good of you to offer to buy those shells," she said, gratefully. "I'm afraid they're not really worth five cents, but you have no idea how much I want that stamp."

Reggie stood digging his toes into the sand for

a moment in silence; then he blurted out abruptly—

"I suppose you're in a scrape, and don't want your father or Sarah to see some letter you've written."

"Yes, that's it; that's just it!" cried Nora. "Oh, Reggie, I am in an awful scrape. I'd give anything in the world to be able to tell you about it, but I can't. If I told it would get somebody I love very much into dreadful trouble, and I would rather die than do that."

"You mustn't tell if it's as bad as that," said Reggie, choking down his own curiosity with difficulty. "Is the person you're afraid of getting into trouble all right?"

"She's the loveliest person in the world," declared Nora. "She never did anything wrong; never since she was born, and I love her—oh, I can't tell you how much I love her. It's all my fault, and it wouldn't ever have happened if I hadn't done something wrong in the first place. I disobeyed, and that was the beginning of all the trouble."

"I see," said Reggie, thoughtfully; "then of course you can't tell. I wish you'd tell me just one thing, though. What made you say you didn't know the Campbells when you did?"

Nora looked very much distressed.

"I wish I could explain," she said, hopelessly,

"but I can't, not without telling the rest. I know you must all think me terribly queer, and the worst of it is, I shall never be able to explain anything."

"Never!" exclaimed Reggie, incredulously.
"You mean we won't ever understand?"

"I'm afraid not," said Nora. "I'm afraid you'll always have to go on thinking me queer, and—and—oh, I'm so dreadfully sorry!" And the poor child covered her face with her hands, and burst into a perfect tempest of crying.

Reggie was very much distressed. He longed to comfort Nora, but all he could think of to say was —

"Oh, do stop crying. There isn't any use, you know. I don't want to hear anything you can't tell, so let's come along and look for some more shells. Oh, by the way, here's that five cents you wanted." And embarrassed Reggie plunged a hand into his trousers pocket.

Nora clasped the precious coin as if it had been gold instead of copper, and having hastily transferred it to her own pocket, she checked her sobs, dried her eyes, and, with a mighty effort, plunged into the interesting occupation of looking for shells.

When Nora and Reggie rejoined the Campbells, some fifteen minutes later, they were both surprised by the decided change in the atmos-

phe. Marjorie greeted Nora affectionately, even slipping an arm round her, as they sat side by side on the sand, and Bobby asked to look at the shells.

"They are beauties," remarked Marjorie, amiably, as Nora spread out her treasures. "I wish we had shells like that at home."

"Reggie says he has some wonderful things that he picked up in Egypt," said Nora, who was feeling immensely relieved, now that the certainty of being able to post her letter was assured. "Did he ever tell you about the time he and a little English girl got lost on the desert?" The Campbells had heard the story, but did not appear averse to hearing it again, and Reggie acceded readily to Marjorie's request to relate his exciting experience. Reggie was rather proud of that Egyptian episode, and told his story well, ending with the dramatic appearance on the scene of the father of his little English friend.

"Now you tell us a story, Kathleen," said Reggie, when he had brought his own tale to a satisfactory conclusion. "You tell splendid stories."

"Do you, Kathleen?" inquired Marjorie, in surprise. "I never heard you tell a story."

"She told me some first-rate ones on the boat," maintained Reggie. "She makes them up as she goes along, don't you, Kathleen?"

"Sometimes I do," said Nora, modestly.

"Make up one now," urged Marjorie, who, to tell the truth, was rather sceptical of her friend's powers of invention. "It's too hot to do anything else, and we might as well sit here till we go back to the hotel."

Nora hesitated for a moment, and then she began in a rather dreamy voice :

"Once upon a time there were a father and mother who had two twin baby girls. The babies were so exactly alike that nobody in the world could tell them apart except their mother. The father and mother loved their babies dearly, but they were very poor. The father was terribly clever, and wrote beautiful poetry and plays, but most people didn't appreciate his things, so the publishers wouldn't take them, and he couldn't make any money. At last he was taken ill, and the poor little mother had to take care of them all, and work very hard to earn enough money to keep them from being hungry.

"One day a fairy came to the flat where they were living, and she said : 'I know of a king and queen who live in a beautiful palace, and have everything they want in the world to make them happy, except just one ; they want a baby girl. I have promised to find a baby for them, and I want you to let me have one of your twins.'

"The father and mother were very angry at

first, and said they would never, never part with one of their children, but things kept getting worse and worse, and the poor father was so ill that the doctor said if he couldn't have medicines and nourishing food he would surely die. And the fairy kept on coming, and trying to persuade them. So at last one day, when the father was very ill indeed, and there wasn't anything in the house to eat, the little mother went to church, and prayed for a long time, and when she came home she told the father that she had decided to give the fairy one of her babies for the king and queen. Her heart was almost broken, but she knew it was the only thing to do. So they sent for the fairy.

"The fairy was delighted, and she came right away in a cab."

"I didn't know fairies ever rode in cabs," laughed Marjorie.

Nora blushed.

"This was a very modern fairy," she said. "When she was ready to take the baby away, the mother couldn't make up her mind which of her twins to part with, so she made the father go into the room where they were both asleep, and he chose one, but he couldn't tell which it was."

"What were the babies' names?" inquired Bobby, who liked detail.

"Their names were—were—oh, suppose we call them Violet and Lilybell. The father happened

to choose Violet, but he didn't know it till afterwards.

"The fairy took little Violet to the marble palace, and the king and queen were delighted with her. They dressed her in satins and laces, and when she was old enough to play with toys, they bought her the most expensive things they could find. She used to play in a beautiful garden, and sometimes her mother and Lilybell would come and peep at her through the railings. They never could speak to Violet, or let her know they were there, because the mother had promised the fairy never to bother the king and queen, or to let Violet know they were not her real father and mother. It made the poor mother very sad never to be able to speak to her own little girl, and Lilybell used to wish and wish that she could do something about it.

"At last, when the twins were about twelve years old, it happened that Lilybell went alone one day to look through the railings into the beautiful garden. While she was standing there a wonderful thing happened. One of the palace servants came along, and thought Lilybell was Violet, because you see the twins were still so much alike nobody could possibly tell them apart. At first Lilybell tried to explain to the servant, and then, all at once, she had a great temptation. She had always wanted to get inside that palace

more than to do anything else in the world. So she stopped talking, and just let the maid push her through the garden gate and straight into the palace. Then the servant went away, thinking everything was all right, and Lilybell was left alone. There weren't any people about, and she went on up the marble stairs to a beautiful room and there, sitting writing a letter, she found Violet.

"Of course Violet was very much astonished to see another girl so exactly like herself, and she began asking questions, and before Lilybell realized the dreadful thing she was doing, she had told her the whole story, about her mother, and the fairy, and the king and queen. Then Violet grew very much excited, and said she must know her own mother, who loved her so dearly, and at last she persuaded Lilybell to change clothes with her, and take her place in the palace, while she went to see her own mother.

"At first it all seemed quite easy, and the twins thought they would be able to change back again the very next day, but that night the king suddenly decided to go away on a long journey and take Violet with him. Poor Lilybell was terribly frightened, but she was afraid to tell any one what had happened, for fear her mother might be punished for letting Violet stay with her all night, so she had to keep on pretending and pretending, and it got harder and harder, and —"

"Come, children, time to go home," called Sarah's peremptory voice. "The boys say they must get their donkeys back to the hotel before six."

"Oh, bother!" exclaimed Reggie, impatiently; "there isn't any hurry. Finish the story first, Kathleen." But Nora was already on her feet.

"I can't," she said. "We've got to go. Anyhow, I don't know the end yet."

"It's a rather silly story," remarked Marjorie. "Of course such a thing could never really happen, and I don't care much for fairy-tales any more. I'm beginning to read Dickens and Scott, you know."

"I'd like to know what happened when the king and queen found out," said Reggie, who had not outgrown his love of stories. "Can't you hurry and make up the rest, Kathleen?"

But Nora was saved the necessity of a reply, for at that moment she was seized upon by the small Percy Allen, who had just wakened from a nap in his nurse's lap, and now desired to "do home in de tart wis Tathleen." So Nora—who adored babies—was relegated to the donkey-cart with Percy and Marie, and Marjorie, Sarah and the two boys, took their places in the other carts.

It was not until they were entering the hotel that Nora found an opportunity for a private word

with Reggie, but then she managed to drop behind Sarah long enough to whisper to her friend :

“ Will you do something for me, Reggie ? ”

“ You bet I will ! ” was Reggie’s hearty assurance.

Nora hastily drew something from her pocket, and thrust it into his hand.

“ Buy a stamp and post this letter,” she whispered. “ Here’s your five cents back. Sarah won’t let me go to the office by myself, and she’s always around. It’s a terribly important letter. Will you be sure it gets off on the steamer to-morrow morning ? ”

“ Sure,” promised Reggie, with a confident nod, and then Sarah turned to see why her charge was lingering behind, and there was no time for more conversation.

Five minutes later the precious letter was safely deposited in the mail-box, and Reggie was on his way to his own room. He was more than a little curious, but, being a gentleman, he felt he had no right to bother his friend with questions, and he had been careful not to look at the address on the letter.

“ She’s all right, I know she is,” he told himself confidently. “ People do get into awful scrapes sometimes, and their friends ought to help them out. I rather like her, too, but I wish she hadn’t told that fib about not knowing the Campbells.”

CHAPTER XIII

THE DOCTOR'S ORDERS

IT was Wednesday morning, and the little Bermuda steamer had sailed away on her voyage back to New York, carrying a goodly number of passengers, and several bags of mail. From the hotel piazza many of the guests had watched her departure, waving farewells to friends and acquaintances on board, and now there was nothing more to be seen but a little cloud of smoke, rapidly disappearing on the horizon.

"Well, here we are cut off from the rest of the world till the boat comes back next week," Nora heard the Campbells' uncle, Mr. Allen, remark to another gentleman, and, oddly enough, the words caused her a scarcely understood feeling of satisfaction, even pleasure. Now that she was sure her letter was safely on its way to New York her principal cause for anxiety had been removed. There was nothing more that she could do, and, after all, Bermuda was very beautiful, and people were very kind. Even "playing a part" did not seem quite so difficult this lovely morning.

She stood leaning against the piazza railing, watching a party of guests start for a sail. It did not seem possible that anything unpleasant could happen on such a morning. Ever since their return from the beach the previous afternoon, Marjorie had been very kind and pleasant. She had spent a wonderful evening, watching the marvelous performances of a famous magician, and this afternoon Reggie's father was to take them all to visit some interesting caves. Nora had never seen a cave, and her romantic little soul thrilled at the prospect. If only Mr. Crawford would stop watching her so intently, and with such a worried, puzzled look in his eyes, she felt she could really be almost happy. But that Kathleen's father was worried about something it was easy to see, and Nora had a strong misgiving that his anxiety was caused by herself.

"Hello, Kathleen!" said Reggie, sauntering up to his friend's side. "What are you going to do this morning?"

"Marjorie has asked me to go out with her in the donkey car," answered Nora. "Don't you love donkeys?"

"Oh, they're not bad," Reggie admitted, "but of course they're not exciting like camels. I rode a camel when I was in Egypt, and that really was great."

"It must have been," agreed Nora. "I hope I

shall travel a lot when I grow up. I should like to see everything in the world, but of course I can't; it would cost too much."

"What are you people talking about?" inquired Marjorie, joining the others and slipping an arm affectionately about Nora's waist. Marjorie was looking unusually serious and important that morning, and her manner to Nora was not without a touch of protecting tenderness.

"Kathleen was saying she would like to see every place in the world," said Reggie, laughing.

"I thought I heard Kathleen talking about something costing too much," said Marjorie, suspiciously.

"So I did," said Nora, innocently. "I said of course I couldn't travel, because it would cost too much."

"This is the first time I ever heard you bothering about money," said Marjorie. "I never knew any girl who could spend so much, and think as little about it as you can. I didn't think you cared about traveling either. You always said you would rather spend the summer at Big Moose than go abroad. I'd give anything to go to Europe, but you always told me you were terribly bored that winter you spent in Rome."

"Rome!" exclaimed Reggie, his eyes opening wide in astonishment; "why, you never told me

you had been to Rome. I thought you said — ” Reggie paused abruptly, warned by the agonized appeal in Nora's eyes.

Marjorie gave a little excited gasp, and suddenly removing her arm from Nora's waist, hurried away without another word, and a moment later was in earnest conversation with her aunt, who had just come out on the piazza. Nora gazed after her hopelessly.

“ Now she'll think I've told another fib,” she said, with a half suppressed sob, “ and she was just beginning to act as if she liked me.”

“ Well, you have, haven't you ? ” said Reggie, bluntly. He had grown suddenly serious, and was looking rather disgusted as well.

Nora was silent. To deny the charge would only lead to more questions that she could not answer, and yet—Reggie had been so kind, and she liked him so much. Oh, why had she forgotten about that year Kathleen had spent abroad? It had all happened so long ago, before she had known of the existence of her twin sister, and she had quite forgotten it when she had told Reggie so confidently on the steamer that she had never been on a big ship before. She stood with crimson cheeks and downcast eyes, the picture of shame and humiliation. Reggie turned away abruptly.

“ Well, I guess I'll go and look up Father,” he

said in a tone of would-be indifference. "Perhaps he'll take me fishing."

Nora opened her lips to speak, but before the words would come Reggie had left her, and, with a horrible foreboding that she was going to cry, she turned and hurried into the house.

She found Sarah in her room, arranging a great bowl of roses.

"Your papa brought them in," the maid explained. "Did you ever see such beauties?"

"They're very pretty," said Nora, indifferently, and Sarah, noticing the tremor in her voice, looked at her sharply.

"What's the matter?" she inquired. "Don't you feel well?"

"Oh, yes, I'm very well indeed," Nora assured her, "only—only I'm feeling a little unhappy about something. I'll be all right in a few minutes." And she went over to the window, and stood with her back to Sarah, while two big tears rolled slowly down her cheeks. Sarah went on arranging the roses in silence.

"I suppose you and Miss Marjorie have been quarreling again," she observed at last. "Why two children should seem to enjoy quarreling, as you two seem to enjoy it, is more than I can make out. I don't believe Miss Joy ever had a quarrel with any one in her life."

"I don't enjoy quarreling with people," pro-

tested Nora, her voice still far from steady. "I hate it; I ——" Nora checked herself abruptly, for at that moment the door opened, and Mr. Crawford entered, accompanied by a tall thin lady, whom she had never seen before.

"Well, Kathleen darling," began Mr. Crawford, cheerfully, "isn't this a pleasant surprise?"

Nora, feeling that something was evidently expected of her, came forward, and held out her hand to the stranger, but there was no expression of pleasure or recognition on her face.

"How do you do?" she said, politely.

The thin lady stood looking at her very intently, and Nora noticed that she had keen brown eyes, that seemed to see right through one. After a moment of silence, she suddenly inquired sharply —

"Who am I, Kathleen?"

At the unexpected question, Nora started back, and a look of actual terror came into her face.

"I—I don't know," she faltered; "at least I mean —"

"I thought so," said the lady, quietly. Then turning to Mr. Crawford—who had grown very pale—she added in a low tone —

"Just what I feared from what you told me. I would consult Dr. Walker at once; he is considered the best here."

Nora did not hear the words; she was too frightened to think of anything but the dreadful admission she had made. She never doubted for a moment but that she had been found out, and stood awaiting the torrent of reproaches which she fully expected to follow. She was conscious of the fact that Sarah had left off arranging the roses, and was staring at her in horrified amazement. Then Mr. Crawford spoke, but, to Nora's surprise, there was no anger in his voice.

"Why, Kathleen," he said, gently, "surely you must remember Miss Beck, who was so good to you last winter when you had bronchitis. Try and think, darling."

But Nora only shook her head helplessly.

"Don't worry her, Mr. Crawford," said Miss Beck in a warning whisper. "Come and lie down on the sofa, Kathleen. There isn't anything to be frightened about; you'll be better in a little while."

Nora had no objection to complying with this request. It was a great relief to close her eyes, and hide her burning face in the sofa pillow, but why should she be told to lie down? She could not imagine, unless this were some new mode of punishment. She lay still while the others talked in whispers. Then the door closed, and she realized that Mr. Crawford had left the room. A moment later, a hand was laid on her shoulder,

and she opened her eyes to find Miss Beck standing over her.

"Open your mouth, dear," Miss Beck commanded; "I want to take your temperature."

"What for?" inquired Nora. She did not feel at all sure what form this strange new punishment was going to take.

"To see if you are feverish," Miss Beck explained.

Then all at once Nora remembered something, and the recollection afforded her a great relief. When she had the measles the doctor had put a little tube under her tongue, and had made the same remark about taking her temperature. Was it possible, after all, that she had not been found out, but that they all thought she was ill? Nora nearly laughed out loud at the absurdness of the idea. Why in the world should people think her ill, just because she hadn't been able to remember somebody she was supposed to know? But she reflected that anything was better than having her secret discovered, so she made no further objection, and sat patiently, with the little thermometer in her mouth, while Miss Beck looked at her watch, and Sarah moved softly about the room looking both shocked and worried.

In due time the thermometer was removed, and Miss Beck examined it carefully.

"She has no fever," Nora heard her tell Sarah,

and then the two women talked in low voices, and Nora could only catch an occasional sentence of their conversation.

"She hasn't been a bit natural since she left New York," Sarah affirmed. "She's been much better-tempered, though, and easier to get on with, and I didn't think much of it except to be thankful she was behaving so well."

The voices dropped, and Nora could make out nothing more until Miss Beck said —

"He says he has been worried ever since you came, but he couldn't make up his mind what the trouble was till this morning when a lady told him something the child had said to her niece yesterday that seemed to show there was something wrong with her brain. I've been down here with a patient for the past month, but she left this morning on the steamer, and I had just seen her off, when I met Mr. Crawford. You see, I'm pretty tired, for my old lady was a trying case, so I thought I might as well stay on here by myself for a week's rest. Of course I couldn't refuse Mr. Crawford, when he asked me to take this case."

Again the voices were lowered, but Nora had learned all that was necessary. They thought she must be ill, because she couldn't remember people, and Miss Beck was a nurse. It would be dreadful to go on pretending to be ill, and letting

people worry about her. She could not forget the pain in Mr. Crawford's face when he had asked her if she did not remember Miss Beck. But if she told the truth now, what might not happen to Mummy? Perhaps if she kept on pretending to be ill, they might go home sooner, and once in New York, she would surely be able to find some way of getting back to the studio, and changing places with Kathleen. Then, when Mr. Crawford found that his own Kathleen was quite well, he would be so happy, and perhaps things might go on just as they used to. She was too young to realize all the difficulties and complications of such a course; her one idea was to "play her part" to the end, and save her mother from trouble and possible disgrace.

But would she be able to go on pretending to be ill? That was the question. She knew very little about illness, and had no very clear idea how a person who was supposed to require the services of a trained nurse ought to act.

"I suppose Father had to play he was ill sometimes when he was acting," she reflected. "There was that play Mummy read me where he had to die in a garret. I suppose I must lie still, and keep my eyes shut most of the time, and talk in a very low voice, and only speak when people ask me questions. Oh, I do wonder what they think is the matter with me."

Nora's reflections were interrupted by the return of Mr. Crawford, accompanied this time by a stout gentleman, who seemed to know Miss Beck, and whom she addressed as Dr. Walker. Dr. Walker—who appeared to be rather a pompous person—began at once putting Sarah through a cross-examination, as to everything her charge had said or done since leaving New York. They spoke in whispers, but Nora—who was eagerly listening to catch every word—was able to understand a good deal of what they said.

"She hadn't seemed real well for two or three weeks," Sarah explained. "She was nervous and fretful, and two or three times I found her crying, but she wouldn't tell me what the matter was. The housekeeper sent for the doctor, but he didn't seem to think it was anything worse than spring fever. He said a change would do her good, and I thought she would be all right when she got down here. But it was only after we were on the boat that ——"

Here the doctor gave a warning cough, and glanced significantly at the little motionless figure on the sofa. Sarah dropped her voice, and Nora heard no more until Dr. Walker came over to her side, and took her hand.

"Not feeling quite up to the mark this morning, eh?" he remarked cheerfully. "Got a pretty bad headache, haven't you?"

"No," said Nora, truthfully; "I haven't any headache at all."

The doctor smiled indulgently, and shook his head.

"Well, now that's very nice, isn't it?" he said, but his voice did not sound as if he were altogether satisfied. "All we need, I think, is a good long rest, and we shall be as well as ever again. You are going to be so happy with kind Miss Beck to take care of you, that you won't mind lying still for a few days."

Nora sat up. This was rather more than she had bargained for.

"I think you are mistaken about my being ill," she said, politely; "I am perfectly well, I really am."

"There, there, that's all right, my dear, we know all about it. Just lie down again, and don't worry your little brain about anything." And Nora was forced gently back among the sofa cushions.

"But you don't know all about it; that's just the trouble," protested Nora. "I can't explain—at least I'd much rather not—but I don't want people to be unhappy about me, and think I am ill when I'm not."

"My dear little girl, you will really have to stop talking, or we shall be obliged to scold you." The doctor still spoke playfully, but there was de-

cision in his tone as well, and Nora dared not disobey him. She noticed that both Miss Beck and Sarah were looking very grave, and that Mr. Crawford was pale and troubled. It was dreadful to see Kathleen's daddy so unhappy, and suddenly Nora made a desperate resolution.

"I'm going to tell the truth," she said, sitting up again, in spite of the doctor's efforts to keep her quiet. "You all think I'm Kathleen Crawford, but —"

Nora got no farther, for the doctor laid a firm hand on her lips.

"Not another word, my little girl," he said. "Everything is quite all right, and we understand, but we cannot let you talk just now."

There was no use in trying to explain. No one would listen to her. Perhaps they would not believe her now, even if she told the whole story. They thought she was very ill ; probably delirious. She had read in books of people who were delirious and talked nonsense for days and nights at a time. With a sob, Nora buried her face in the sofa cushions.

An hour later Nora was in bed ; the room had been darkened, and Miss Beck, in her nurse's uniform, was installed at the bedside. Nora had not been even allowed to undress herself. Miss Beck and Sarah had undressed her just as though she were a baby. As soon as she was in bed Miss

Beck had brought her some medicine in a glass. It did not taste very good, but after she had swallowed it things did not seem quite so dreadful as they had before, for she grew drowsy and indifferent, and scarcely noticed when the doctor came back, and held another whispered conversation with Miss Beck and Sarah. She only woke up to a passing interest in things when her temperature was being taken, and when she heard the doctor say —

“She must be kept absolutely quiet for the next few days. It is a clear case of nervous breakdown, accompanied by aphasia. It has probably been caused by over-study.”

Nora wanted to tell him that she had not studied very hard, and that she was quite sure her nerves were not “broken down,” but she felt too sleepy to talk, and soon dropped off into a heavy, dreamless sleep, from which she did not wake till late in the afternoon.

CHAPTER XIV

NORA TO THE RESCUE

FOR five days Nora had been a prisoner in her room—five long, bright, interminable days. Through the open windows she had heard the sounds of voices and laughter ; she had even recognized the voices of Reggie and the Campbells, but the only people she had seen were the doctor, Mr. Crawford, Miss Beck, and Sarah. Either Miss Beck or Sarah was always at her bedside, and several times each day Mr. Crawford would come softly into the room, and stand looking down at her, with such sorrow and tenderness in his eyes, that she longed to comfort him. Twice she had tried to explain, but each time Miss Beck had silenced her, with the same assurance that everything was all right, and she would soon be quite well again. And then Kathleen's father had gone away, looking sadder than ever. One grain of comfort Nora had, and that was in the fact that they were to go back to New York on the next boat. Mr. Crawford was anxious to reach home as soon as possible, in order to procure

better medical advice for his little daughter. He was not altogether satisfied with the opinion of the Bermuda doctor. The steamer from New York was due on Monday, and would sail again on Wednesday morning. It was Monday morning now, and in four days more, provided all went well, they would be in New York. What would happen after that Nora hardly dared to think, but at least Mummy would be near, and in those long, solitary days the poor child had longed for her mother with a longing that was almost too great to bear.

But on that glorious Monday morning there came a change, as welcome to Nora as it was unexpected. In the first place, Dr. Walker did not make his usual morning visit. Miss Beck said he had been called away, to see a very sick patient, at the other end of the island. The next thing that happened was that Miss Beck spent an unusual length of time in looking out of the window, and finally left the room, leaving her patient in Sarah's charge. When she returned, some ten minutes later, she was smiling, and there was a note of triumph in her voice.

"I have had a little talk with Mr. Crawford," she announced to Sarah, "and he says I may do as I think best. He has great confidence in my judgment."

"Do you think it's the right thing to go against

the doctor's orders?" questioned Sarah, doubtfully.

Miss Beck pursed her thin lips, and tossed her head scornfully.

"I flatter myself that I have had sufficient experience to judge for myself sometimes," she said. "Doctors don't know everything in this world; you can take it from me they don't. That child hasn't eaten enough in the past two days to keep a canary bird alive, and what she needs is a little fresh air and a change of scene, as I've just been telling her father. The doctor may say what he chooses when he comes home, but that won't be before this evening, and in the meantime I'm going to have my own way."

Sarah was aghast. That any one should dare to disobey a doctor's orders seemed to her little less than criminal. But Miss Beck was a professional nurse, and she herself was only a servant, so she wisely held her peace. Miss Beck approached Nora's bedside in her brisk, decided way.

"I am going to let you get up for a while," she said, stooping to touch the child's cool forehead. "You haven't a particle of fever, and I am sure the change will do you good."

Nora—who had been lying with half-closed eyes, listlessly trying to make up the plot for a new story—started up with a little cry of joy.

"Oh, may I really get up?" There was such

untold relief in the child's voice, and in her brightening face, that Miss Beck felt more convinced than ever that she was right in her opinion. Still, it would not do to raise false hopes, so she answered guardedly :

" You seem better this morning, and if you will promise to be very quiet, and do just as you are told, you may be dressed and go out on the lawn for an hour. But remember, you are not to get excited, or tire yourself in any way."

" I'll do anything you want me to if you'll only let me get up," said Nora, humbly. " I didn't know it was possible to get so terribly tired of anything as I am of this bed."

Miss Beck smiled, and for the first time Nora thought her smile was rather pleasant.

" Well, you have had a good deal of it," she admitted. " I would have had you up days ago if it had rested with me, but the doctor—well, I suppose he knew what he was talking about. Now I want you to stand up, and tell me if your legs feel very weak."

" They don't feel weak at all," declared Nora, and in proof thereof, she gave herself a little shake, and promptly began skipping about the room. " Oh, but it is good to be out of that horrid bed !" she cried joyfully. " I feel as if I would like to run about ten miles. Please let me dress myself ; I just hate having people dress me."

Miss Beck and Sarah exchanged glances, and Sarah whispered :

"Not right yet, you see. She was always the laziest child about doing things for herself."

Miss Beck said nothing, but she was looking very much puzzled. Indeed, she was finding her present case about the most puzzling she had ever undertaken. No objection was made, however, to Nora's performing her own toilet, and the two women watched her in ever-growing astonishment.

"She hasn't lost flesh at any rate," remarked Sarah, when Nora, after several futile attempts to button her dress in the back, was forced to appeal to the maid for assistance. "This dress was almost too big for her before we left New York, and now it's got to be let out."

"What will she say when Kathleen comes back, and she finds all her clothes too loose again?" thought Nora uneasily. "Oh, what an awful mix-up it all is! But I'm so happy to be up again that I can't worry much about anything this morning."

Mr. Crawford was waiting for his little daughter in the corridor, and his greeting was so loving and tender, that Nora was conscious of a sudden pang of shame and remorse at the thought of all the pain and anxiety she was causing Kathleen's father. These feelings were not diminished when,

after she had been comfortably installed in a steamer chair on the lawn, in view of the tennis courts, Mr. Crawford produced from his pocket a small leather case which he told her to open.

Nora complied, and in the next moment she uttered a little cry of admiration, for in the case was a tiny gold watch, and attached to the watch was a beautiful gold chain.

"Oh, how lovely, how very lovely!" she exclaimed. "Did you buy it? Is it a present for somebody?"

"I certainly did buy it for a present," said Mr. Crawford, smiling. "I hoped you would like it, darling."

"You mean you bought it for Kath—I mean for me!" gasped Nora. "Oh, but it's much too beautiful. I'm sure I ought not to take it."

All the pleasure died suddenly out of Mr. Crawford's face, and he looked very grave and troubled.

"I want you to have it, dear," he said in a voice that trembled a little, and Nora, suddenly remembering that this was scarcely the way in which little girls usually accepted presents from their fathers, blushed a vivid crimson, and murmured an embarrassed "Thank you, oh, thank you very much."

But all her pleasure in the pretty trinket was gone, and she sat gazing at it with dim, unseeing

eyes, while Mr. Crawford and Miss Beck moved away, and held a low-toned conversation. Oh, how sorry and ashamed she felt! Of course the watch could be given to its rightful owner as soon as she and Kathleen met, but in the meantime to keep it and even wear it, seemed so—so almost dishonest. A sob rose in Nora's throat, and she had hard work in keeping back the rising tears. How gladly she would have confessed everything at that moment; taken any punishment they might have thought fit to inflict, but nobody would believe her—they would only look shocked and frightened, and tell her not to talk, and that she would soon be well again. If she spoke of it it might mean an immediate return to that darkened room. Nora shuddered at the horrible possibility. So after a little more reflection, she put the watch and chain back in the case, and resolutely closed the lid.

"If I keep looking at them I may begin to be envious," she told herself. "I've always wanted a gold watch and chain more than anything else in the world."

It was very pleasant out there in the fresh air and sunshine, and before long Nora found herself beginning to take an interest in watching the tennis players. A tournament was in progress, and among the many spectators she soon discovered the two Campbells and their uncle and aunt.

They did not see her, but Mr. and Mrs. Carew—who were also watching the players—came to speak to her, and told her how glad they were to see her out again.

"You don't look as if you had been ill," Mr. Carew said, kindly, to which Nora replied that she felt very well indeed.

"Don't you think I might go for a walk?" she added pleadingly, but Mr. and Mrs. Carew shook their heads, and told her she must be a good girl, and do just as Miss Beck said, and then they went back to their seats, and Nora was left alone with her two guardians, Miss Beck and Sarah, for Mr. Crawford had gone into the hotel after his conversation with the nurse.

By and by Miss Beck rose.

"I am going to leave you for a little while," she told Nora. "I want to call on a friend at the hotel where I was staying with my last patient. You may stay here with Sarah till I come back."

It was with a feeling of distinct satisfaction that Nora watched the nurse disappear in the distance. Miss Beck meant to be kind, she was sure, but it was very tiresome to be constantly watched over, and she was not accustomed to nurses. With Miss Beck safely out of the way, perhaps Sarah might be persuaded to take her for just a little walk. But when approached on the subject Sarah proved quite firm.

" You are to be kept perfectly quiet," she said ; " those were the doctor's orders. I'll read to you if you like."

Nora pouted. She was by nature a very amiable child, but five days of enforced quiet in a darkened room had tried her nerves more than a little.

" I don't want to hear any reading, thank you," she said, crossly, and then she deliberately turned her back on Sarah, who thereupon opened an old magazine she had found on a bench, and immediately became deeply absorbed in an account of the exciting adventures of a band of Arctic explorers.

For the next fifteen minutes nothing happened. Nora watched the tennis players, and listened to the birds. Then suddenly, she caught sight of a familiar figure approaching in her direction. It was Reggie Starr. At sight of his friend, Reggie's face brightened perceptibly, and he ran quickly across the lawn to greet her.

" Hello ! " he began, in his cheerful, matter-of-fact voice, " are you all right again ? "

" I was always all right," returned Nora, who was still feeling decidedly cross. " There never was anything the matter with me. They only thought I was ill."

Reggie opened his lips to say something ; then evidently changed his mind, and closed them

again. There was a moment of rather embarrassed silence, which Reggie broke.

"Why did you let them keep you in bed if there wasn't anything the matter with you?" he inquired, bluntly. "I bet people would have a pretty hard time keeping me in bed."

"Did you ever have a trained nurse?" Nora asked.

"Goodness no! I should hope not. Mother has them sometimes, though, and they're an awful bother."

"Well, if you'd ever had one you'd understand why I had to stay in bed," said Nora. "It's perfectly awful. They take your temperature every two hours, and they won't let you talk, and make you drink milk, and—oh, don't let's talk about it. I'm up this morning, anyhow, and it's lovely out here. I'm just crazy to go for a walk."

"Do you think you'd better?" Reggie inquired doubtfully. "Everybody seems to think you've been very ill."

"Well, I haven't been very ill, even if they do think so, and if I don't have a good run soon, I shall—I believe I shall scream, or do something awful."

"The Campbells say——" began Reggie, but Nora cut him short.

"The Campbells don't know anything about it," she snapped. "I guess I ought to know

whether I've been ill or not, better than Marjorie Campbell."

Reggie looked very much puzzled, and then he suddenly remembered something which during the past few days he had been quite ready to forget. When a girl was so ill that she had to have a trained nurse, and wasn't allowed to see any of her friends, it didn't seem quite fair to remember that she hadn't always told the truth. Besides, Marjorie Campbell had dropped mysterious hints, which he had not altogether understood, but which seemed to convey the impression that poor Kathleen wasn't to be held responsible for all the things she said. But now, here was Kathleen herself, looking the picture of health, and assuring him that she had never been ill at all.

"I guess I know what the trouble with you is," he remarked, with a sudden inspiration; "you've got such a lot of imagination, you just can't help making up things."

Nora blushed.

"I know you think I tell fibs," she said, sadly, "and I'm afraid I can't ever make people understand. I've tried to explain, but nobody will believe me. It's dreadful. Sometimes I feel as if I couldn't bear it."

There were tears in Nora's eyes, and her voice trembled. Reggie was touched.

"Well, never mind," he said, good-naturedly;

"don't let's bother about it. I say, the steamer's coming. Wouldn't you like to come down to the pier, and watch the people get off?"

Nora glanced doubtfully at Sarah, who was by this time absorbed in a detective story, and had not even noticed Reggie's approach. Then she rose resolutely.

"Come along," she said, and in another second she was running across the lawn so fast that even fleet-footed Reggie found some difficulty in keeping pace with her.

"Oh, I say, hold on, not quite so fast!" gasped Reggie. "I should say you could run, but what makes you in such a hurry? The steamer won't be in for ten minutes."

"I don't care anything about the steamer," scoffed Nora. "All I want is to get away quick, before Sarah sees me. Miss Beck has gone to call on somebody at another hotel, but she told Sarah to watch me all the time she was away. Oh, but I do feel better for that run!" And, having reached what she considered a safe distance from the watchful Sarah, Nora paused for breath.

Reggie grinned understandingly.

"I don't believe she can catch up now," he said, with a backward glance in the direction from which they had come. "She's rather fat, isn't she?"

"Not very, but she doesn't like walking fast; she says it gives her a pain in her side. I don't

want to worry her, but I just had to get away for a few minutes. Oh, look at all the people on the pier."

"There are the Campbells," announced Reggie. "They've got the Allen baby with them, too. Let's go and speak to them."

Nora hesitated, but at that very moment the small Percy Allen caught sight of his beloved "Tathleen," and, with a cry of joy, had dropped his cousin Marjorie's hand, and started on a run in her direction.

"Come back, baby," shrieked Marjorie, starting in hot pursuit. "Oh, he'll be run over; I know he will!"

But baby had already dashed across the road to the imminent risk of life and limb, and was clinging rapturously to Nora's skirts.

"Percy wants to stay wis Tathleen," he shouted. "Tathleen tell Percy 'tories."

Nora laughed, and caught the little fellow up in her arms.

"Of course I'll tell you stories, darling," she said, kissing the chubby little face. "Have you missed Tathleen all these long days?"

"Percy wely glad Tathleen tome back," said the child, and he put up a tiny hand and patted Nora's cheek. But by this time Marjorie, pale and breathless, had crossed the road, and borne down upon her naughty little cousin.

"Naughty, naughty baby," she scolded. "Suppose you had been run over; what would Mamma have said to poor Cousin Marjorie? You promised to be a good boy when Mamma let Cousin Marjorie take you to see the big boat come in."

"Percy not naughty boy," objected that small person, whom Nora had now set down on his feet. "Percy tame to see Tathleen."

Then Marjorie, her anxiety about the baby being relieved, turned her attention to Nora.

"I didn't know you were well enough to be out, Kathleen," she said, doubtfully. "Is Sarah with you?"

"She came with me," laughed Reggie. "She gave Sarah the slip. You ought to have seen her run."

Marjorie grew suddenly very grave.

"Here, Bobby," she called to her brother, "you take charge of baby. I've got to talk to Kathleen. Go with Cousin Bobby, Percy, there's a good boy."

But Percy had no intention of being a good boy. On the contrary, he promptly began to cry, declaring his firm intention of staying with Tathleen, and no one else. Marjorie, however, was a stern disciplinarian, and she was really a good deal frightened. So the weeping Percy was led off by his tall cousin, who, in order to assuage his grief, produced from his pocket a large and sticky

lemon-drop, which he promptly deposited in the baby's open mouth.

"Now, Kathleen," said Marjorie, slipping an arm round Nora's waist, "you and I are going back to the hotel together. You ought not to have run away from Sarah. She's probably very much frightened."

"Of course she isn't frightened," protested Nora; "there isn't anything to be frightened about. Oh, if you only knew how glorious it is to be out again! Why won't you let Percy stay with me? I'd love to tell him a story."

"Because you've got to go right back to Sarah," said Marjorie, authoritatively. "Your father told Auntie Ruth that you were to be kept perfectly quiet."

Nora's eyes flashed; her Irish blood was up. It was one thing to be forced to obey Miss Beck, or even Sarah, but quite another to be ordered about by a girl of her own age.

"I will not go back to Sarah until I am ready," she announced defiantly. "I would just like to see any one make me. I don't believe you know what it is to be shut up in a dark room, and have to stay in bed for five whole days. Oh, here comes the steamer. Isn't it crowded?"

Marjorie turned appealingly to the boys.

"Do help me," she pleaded. "We've got to get her back to the hotel, you know."

"Oh, shucks!" exclaimed Reggie. "Do leave her alone. I don't believe there's a single thing the matter with her. You wouldn't either if you had seen her run."

"You don't know anything about it," protested Marjorie. "There is something dreadful the matter with her. Mr. Crawford and Mrs. Carew are terribly worried. Oh, Kathleen dear, please do come. I —"

A yell from Bobby brought his sister's appeal to an abrupt end, and caused her to turn her attention to something quite different.

"Look at the baby, oh, look quick! He's choking or something."

"Of course he's choking," cried the horrified Marjorie. "Did you let him put anything in his mouth?"

"I gave him a lemon-drop to stop his crying," Bobby admitted. "It must have slipped down his throat. Oh, I say! what shall we do? He's getting purple in the face."

"I don't know, oh, I don't know what to do!" wailed Marjorie, wringing her hands. "Run and call somebody quick. Good gracious, Kathleen! what in the world are you doing? She's killing the baby. Oh, oh, oh!" And Marjorie's voice rose to an agonized shriek.

But Nora was not killing the small Percy; she was only shaking him—shaking him with all her

might—and even before Marjorie's cry of alarm had attracted the attention of the crowd on the pier, a small object was seen to fly out of the baby's mouth, and the choking and strangling instantly ceased.

"He is all right now," said a reassuring voice, and a kind-faced lady bent tenderly over the still sobbing Percy. "There, there, little man, there isn't anything more to cry about. It isn't pleasant to be shaken, I know, but it's much better than choking to death."

"The little girl showed great presence of mind," remarked another bystander. "Does anybody know who she is?"

"I think she is that Crawford child," replied the lady who had first spoken. "And here comes Mr. Crawford himself," she added, glancing at two approaching figures, who, with pale, anxious faces, were rapidly making their way towards the scene of action.

"Oh, Mr. Crawford," cried Marjorie, running to meet Kathleen's father, "Kathleen's all right. She's just saved our baby. Bobby gave him a lemon-drop, and it choked him, and I'm sure he would have died if it hadn't been for Kathleen. She just shook him and shook him till the lemon-drop flew out of his mouth. Oh, Kathleen dear, I'm so grateful!" And impulsive Marjorie threw her arms round her friend's neck and hugged her.

Mr. Crawford looked very much relieved.

"I didn't know what had happened," he said. "Kathleen, my darling, you must come back to the hotel. It was wrong to run away by yourself; you have frightened Sarah and me very much."

Nora clasped her hands, and cast an imploring glance at Kathleen's father.

"Please, please don't make me go back to that awful room," she implored. "I'm so tired of being ill; I really can't stand it any longer."

Mr. Crawford looked very much troubled.

"The doctor ——" he began, but Reggie interrupted.

"Excuse me, sir," he said, "but I don't think Kathleen is really ill. She says she's all right, and if you could have seen her run! I say, Kathleen, how did you know what to do to stop that kid from choking? Did you ever see any one choke before?"

"Yes, once," said Nora, who, in the excitement of the moment, had quite forgotten that she was still "playing a part." "Jimmy Judson got a cherry pit stuck in his throat, and Mrs. Judson shook him till it came out."

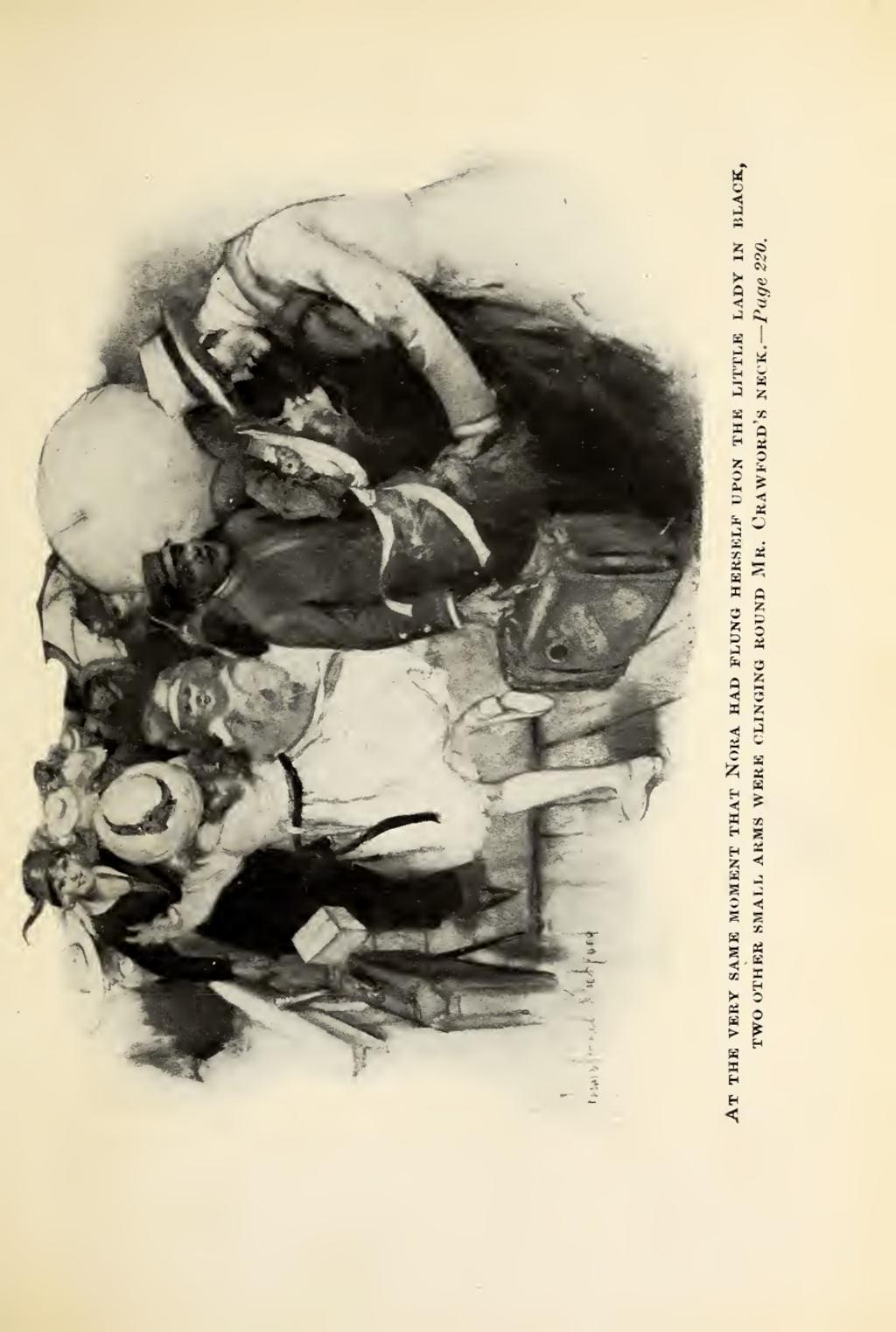
"Jimmy? Mrs. Judson?" repeated Mr. Crawford in amazement. "Kathleen, what in the world are you talking about? I never heard of any such people."

Then Nora remembered, and all the color died suddenly out of her face.

"I—I forgot," she stammered ; "I oughtn't to have talked about the Judsons. They're just some people I know, but — Oh, look, look ! that lady and the little girl coming up the pier ! It is, it really is ! Oh, Mummy, Mummy !" And to the utter amazement of her companions, Nora dashed away down the road, and in another moment had flung herself into the arms of a little lady in black, who, having dropped a suit case, an umbrella and several other belongings, was holding her as if she never meant to let her go again.

But that was not the only extraordinary thing that had happened, for as Nora dashed towards her mother, another little figure was dashing in the opposite direction, and at the very same moment that Nora flung herself upon the little lady in black, two other small arms were clinging round Mr. Crawford's neck, and an eager, excited voice was crying :

"Oh, Daddy, Daddy darling, I'm so glad to get here ! Just think of Nora's getting carried off to Bermuda instead of me ! Mother said we should come on the next steamer, but we had a whole week to wait, and it was awful. Oh, Daddy, what makes you look so queer ? Aren't you glad to see your own little Kathleen ? "



AT THE VERY SAME MOMENT THAT NORA HAD FLUNG HERSELF UPON THE LITTLE LADY IN BLACK,
TWO OTHER SMALL ARMS WERE CLINGING ROUND MR. CRAWFORD'S NECK.—*Page 220.*

CHAPTER XV

THE TWINS

"**I**T'S the most wonderful thing that ever happened in this world," declared Marjorie.

"It's just like a thing in a book or a play," affirmed Bobby. "I didn't suppose any two girls could possibly look so exactly alike."

It was after luncheon, and the two Campbells and Reggie were on the hotel piazza, eagerly discussing the events of the morning. They were not the only excited group who were discussing the same subject, for the extraordinary story had quickly spread among the hotel guests, and more than a dozen pairs of eyes were eagerly watching for a glimpse of the wonderful twins.

"I was too excited to eat any lunch," said Marjorie. "My hand shook so I kept spilling things, and a lump came in my throat every time I tried to swallow. It was all so sudden ; first our scare about Percy, and then the right Kathleen coming off the steamer. It was just like a scene in a play."

"Have some fudge," said Reggie, gallantly presenting a paper bag.

Marjorie accepted the offering, and proceeded to nibble a succulent morsel.

"That Nora must be an awful girl," she remarked, reflectively. "How could anybody have kept up a thing like that for a whole week? She must have planned it all out, so as to come here for a good time instead of poor Kathleen."

"She didn't do anything of the sort," declared Reggie, indignantly. "Mrs. Carew has been telling Mother all about it. She didn't want to deceive people, and she's had an awful time."

"What did she do it for, then?" demanded Marjorie.

"Because she had promised her mother not to let any one find out she wasn't the right Kathleen. She was afraid Mr. Crawford would be angry, and it would get her mother into trouble. I think she was one of the pluckiest girls I ever heard of. It must have been frightful to have to stay in bed for five days, and have a trained nurse."

"I say!" exclaimed Bobby, with a sudden recollection; "that story she told us the other day on the beach—about the king and queen, and the twin babies, you know. She said she didn't know the end of it yet. Why, it must have been all true, and she just changed the names to make it sound as if she was making it up. She must

be awfully clever. But I don't believe Mr. Crawford is angry. He was smiling all through lunch, and he talked a lot to Nora's mother."

"That was because he was so relieved about Kathleen," said Marjorie. "You see, he was terribly worried, because he thought there was something the matter with her brain. I'm relieved, too, for I really am fond of Kathleen."

"I think I like the old Kathleen best," observed Reggie. "I say, isn't her mother pretty? I couldn't help looking at her all lunch-time."

"She and Mr. Crawford have gone for a walk together," reported Bobby. "I suppose they want to talk things over."

"I hope nobody is going to be punished," said Reggie, a little anxiously. "I don't believe any one could scold Mrs. O'Neil; she's so pretty, and I really think Nora was a brick."

"Here come the twins!" cried Bobby, excitedly. "Just look at them. Can you possibly tell which is which?"

"I know Nora by her hat," said Reggie. "Let's go and talk to them."

But there was no need of moving, for at the first sight of her friends the real Kathleen ran eagerly forward. Nora hung back a little shyly, but her twin—whose arm was round her waist—pulled her forward with a firm hand.

"Isn't it the funniest thing that ever hap-

pened?" demanded Kathleen, kissing Marjorie effusively. "Just think of your not knowing me, and thinking Nora had something dreadful the matter with her brain."

"I'm awfully glad we were mistaken," declared Marjorie, giving her friend an impulsive hug. "How did you ever manage to deceive us so, Kath—I mean Nora? You must be very clever."

"It was very hard sometimes," Nora admitted, modestly, "but my father was a great actor, and I tried to think I was playing a part, just as he did. I'm very sorry I deceived you all, and made Mr. Crawford so unhappy, but I thought I had to do it."

"Daddy isn't unhappy now," said Kathleen. "He said he was so thankful to find I was all right that he was ready to forgive everybody in the world. The one thing I can't understand is how Nora could possibly have been afraid of Daddy."

"I'm not a bit afraid of him any more," said Nora, "but you see, I haven't known him as long as you have."

"Your voices are just as much alike as your faces," remarked Bobby. "If I shut my eyes I know I wouldn't have any idea which of you was talking."

"I think I would," said Reggie. "Have some

fudge, Nora? I'm going to try to remember to call you Nora, but Kathleen seems so much more natural."

"Sit down and tell us all about it," said Marjorie; "it's so interesting, and we've hardly heard anything yet."

"Well," said Kathleen, "I'm afraid I was pretty horrid at first. You see, I thought Nora had gone off to Bermuda on purpose, and it did seem rather mean. But after a while I began to realize it had all been a mistake, and then I was ashamed of having made such a fuss. I was dreadfully disappointed, though, and I'm afraid I made poor Mother very unhappy. She wanted to take me home, and explain everything to Mrs. Anderson, but I wouldn't let her. You see, I was beginning to love her, and I wanted to stay with her if I couldn't go to Daddy. Mother would have sent word to Daddy at once, but there isn't any telegraph to Bermuda, so there was nothing to do but wait for the next boat, which didn't sail till day before yesterday. Mother promised to bring me to Daddy just as soon as she possibly could, and of course I wanted to go, but living in the studio was rather fun, and I kept loving Mother better every minute."

"She's very pretty," observed Bobby, sympathetically.

"Pretty! I should think she was! She's the

loveliest person I've ever seen, and I love her better than any one in the world except Daddy."

"Did you get to know the Judsons, or any of my other friends?" asked Nora.

Kathleen laughed.

"I got to know the Judsons very well," she said. "Jimmy and May were in the studio when Mother came back from our house, and told me you had gone, so of course they found out all about everything. Mrs. Judson wanted Mother to write a vaudeville sketch about us. She said she was sure it would make a sensation. Jimmy talks awful slang, but I rather like him, and May is very sweet. There was another girl, too, who wanted me to help her write a composition, and wouldn't believe me when I told her I couldn't."

"That must have been Lina Rosenbaum," said Nora. "She offered to give me a present if I would write her composition for her."

"Well, what's going to happen now you're here, and Mr. Crawford knows everything?" inquired Marjorie.

"I don't know just what's going to happen," said Kathleen, "but I know one thing, and that is I'm never going to give up Mother again, now that I've found her, and of course I shall always stay with Daddy, so I suppose the only thing will be for Mother and Nora to come and live with us."

Nora looked a little doubtful.

"I'm afraid Mummy won't be willing to do that," she said. "I don't think she would like to live in another person's house unless she could work to pay for her board."

"Well, she might be our housekeeper then," suggested Kathleen. "I'm sure she would make a much better one than Mrs. Anderson. Anyhow, I'm never going to let her go again, or you either, so it will have to be arranged in some way."

"It does seem as if twins ought to live together," remarked Reggie.

"Of course they ought, and besides, I need Nora. Aunt Kitty is always saying I wouldn't be half so spoiled and selfish if I had to share things with somebody else, and now that I've stayed with Mother, and found out how lovely it is to be sweet and unselfish like her, I don't intend to be spoiled any longer."

Nora still looked doubtful, but at that moment Sarah was seen approaching in their direction.

"Here comes Sarah," said Kathleen. "Oh, wasn't her face funny when she saw us both on the pier, and didn't know which was which?"

"Not as funny as Miss Beck's was," said Nora, laughing. "I believe she thought everybody had been deceiving her, even your father. She wouldn't speak to me, even to say good-bye. Sarah's beckoning to us. I guess we'd better go."

Kathleen sprang to her feet.

"We're going for a walk," she said. "I want to see everything there is in Bermuda now I'm here."

"You won't have much time if you're going back on the boat day after to-morrow," said Marjorie.

"We're not going back day after to-morrow," said Kathleen, with decision. "We're going to stay three weeks. Daddy arranged in the first place to have me come for three weeks, and now I'm here I'm going to stay. I told Daddy so, and he laughed and pinched my cheek. That always means he's going to do what I want him to. We're coming, Sarah. Good-bye, Marjorie; we'll see you later." And away hurried Kathleen, followed by her still somewhat bewildered twin.

"Kathleen hasn't changed one bit," remarked Marjorie, as the sisters disappeared around a corner of the piazza. "She always managed to get her own way about everything. I'm glad she isn't going right back to New York, though."

"I suppose Nora and her mother will go," said Reggie, regretfully. "I'm sorry, for I like her much better than the new one."

"They won't go if Kathleen decides they are to stay," said Marjorie. And Marjorie was correct in her prediction.

It was after five when the twins and Sarah returned from their walk. It had been a pleasant

afternoon, and Nora had enjoyed it thoroughly, notwithstanding her regret that her mother was not with them.

"I never realized before what a wonderful thing it is to be out-of-doors," she remarked reflectively. "Every one of those five days seemed like a year. It was pretty bad when I had the measles, but then Mummy was with me."

"Of course that must have made a great difference," said Kathleen, with unusual seriousness. "I don't think anybody could be very lonely or unhappy if they had Mother. Do you know, Nora, I think you are almost as unselfish as she is."

Nora's eyes opened wide in surprise.

"Oh, but I'm not!" she protested. "What ever made you think such a thing?"

"Because you're so sweet about letting me share Mother with you. After all, she was your mother first, you know, and if you had wanted to keep her to yourself, you need never have told me about her."

"But I couldn't help telling you," said Nora. "I ought not to have gone into your house at all, but it was such a terrible temptation. You see, I'd been loving you for such a long time."

An odd, softened look came into Kathleen's face, and her lip trembled. "I'm glad you did," she whispered, giving her sister's arm an affec-

tionate squeeze. "I'm afraid I never loved any one very much except Daddy, but I love Mother dearly, and I'm going to love you, too."

Mrs. O'Neil was watching for the children, and came down the piazza steps to meet them. One glance at her mother's face was sufficient to assure Nora that all was well.

"Did you and Daddy have a good, satisfactory talk, Mother?" inquired Kathleen, as they all three went into the hotel together.

"Yes, darling. Your daddy has been so good to me—so wonderfully generous and forgiving."

"Of course he was all right," said Kathleen. "I kept telling you all the time there wasn't anything to be worried about. And is it arranged about your staying here three weeks with Daddy and me?"

Mrs. O'Neil smiled and shook her head.

"I am afraid not, dear," she said; "Nora and I must go back to New York by Wednesday's boat, but you will be so happy with your daddy that you won't miss us much, and when we all get home, we can see each other very often."

Kathleen's face clouded.

"I shall miss you," she declared; "I shall miss you dreadfully. Where's Daddy? I want to speak to him."

"I saw him a few minutes ago," said her mother. "I think he has gone to his room."

"Then I'll go and find him," said Kathleen. "My room is next to his, you know. You're to stay with Nora." And away flew Kathleen, looking very determined about something, and closely followed by the faithful Sarah.

"Oh, Mummy darling, it is good to have you all to myself for a little while," cried Nora, when the door of the room in which she had spent so many dreary days closed behind them. "You can never know how terribly I have wanted you, and how dreadful it has been sometimes."

There was a catch in Nora's voice, and her mother took her in her arms and kissed her.

"Come and sit here on the sofa and tell Mummy all about it," she said tenderly, and with her head on her mother's shoulder, Nora told her story. She told everything from the very beginning, and Mrs. O'Neil listened and sympathized as only she could have done.

"It was very hard," finished Nora, "especially after they thought I was ill. Mr. Crawford was so kind, and I hated to worry him, but I kept thinking about you, and I was so afraid of getting you in trouble."

"My poor little girl," murmured Mrs. O'Neil, kissing her; "I'm afraid I have been very much to blame. I should have known better how to keep my secret even from you, but it was so hard never to be able to speak of my Kathleen to any

one, and as things have turned out, I am afraid I cannot be as sorry as I ought. If it were not for all you have suffered I should be only glad, for Mr. Crawford has been so very good to me. Just think, Nora, he says I may see Kathleen as often as I like, and you children need never be separated again. He reproached me for not having come to him long ago. He did not even know that I was alive. You see, we had never met; all the arrangements were made through Mrs. Crawford and a mutual friend. Mr. Crawford is a very just man, and—oh, Nora darling, I am so happy and so grateful! You have no idea what the anxiety of the past ten days has been."

"I think I have a little," said Nora, softly. "It was pretty bad, but I would do it all over again just to see your eyes look the way they do now. Oh, there's the telephone. Shall I answer it?"

Mrs. O'Neil nodded, and Nora flew to the telephone.

"It's for you, Mummy," she announced. "Somebody wants to know if you would mind coming down to the office for a minute, to speak to the manager."

Mrs. O'Neil rose, looking very much surprised.

"I can't imagine what he wants," she said; "I am sure there must be some mistake."

She left the room, and Nora put away her hat and jacket, reflecting as she did so that it really

was very pleasant to be free to wait upon one's self. A maid was all right for certain occasions, no doubt, but ordinarily she really preferred the old simple ways of the studio. She was not left long in solitude, however, for she had just finished washing her hands and brushing her hair, when the door opened, and Kathleen came in, looking flushed and important.

"Where's Mother?" she demanded, eagerly.

"Gone to the office to speak to the manager. He telephoned that he wanted to see her, but she thinks it must be a mistake."

Kathleen gave a little skip, and clapped her hands.

"It's all right," she assured Nora; "Daddy and I know about it."

"About what?" inquired Nora, laying down the hair-brush, and regarding her twin in astonishment.

Kathleen smiled mysteriously.

"I guess Mother'll tell you pretty soon," she said. "You look awfully well in that dress, Nora; it fits you much better than it used to fit me."

Nora blushed.

"Do you think I ought to wear it?" she asked, timidly. "I love your dresses, but now that you've come, of course you ought to have them all back again."

"I don't want them," said Kathleen, in a tone

of decision. "It's all settled, so you needn't say any more about it. Even Sarah says I've got twice as many clothes as I need, so you are to keep all you want, and you are to keep that watch, too; Daddy says so."

"Oh!" gasped Nora, "how wonderful! But do you think Mummy will let me?"

"Of course she will. I guess my daddy can make a person a present if he wants to. He says you've been very plucky, and he is sure you'll be an actress some day. He saw your father act once, and he was wonderful."

Nora flushed with pride.

"He was a great actor," she said, "and he was your father, too, Kathleen, don't you know that?"

"Yes, I know, but I don't want to talk about it. Daddy is my father, and I'm not going to let any other one ever take his place, even if he was the greatest actor, or the greatest anything else in the world. Daddy says I must be proud of your—our father, but I'm not going to be, at least not now, when I've just got my own daddy back. Here comes Mother. Oh, Mother dear, is it all settled?"

Mrs. O'Neil closed the door, and stood regarding her two small daughters with shining eyes.

"Kathleen," she said in a voice that tried to be stern, but somehow failed, "what have you been telling Mr. Crawford about me?"

Kathleen laughed triumphantly.

"I just told him how you wrote things for the newspapers, and asked him if there weren't any newspapers printed in Bermuda. He thought for a minute, and then he jumped up and kissed me, and said, 'Not a bad idea, little woman,' and then he called up somebody in the office, and talked for a few minutes, and when he was through he laughed and kissed me again, and—why, that's all."

Mrs. O'Neil sank helplessly into the rocking-chair.

"You and your daddy have managed things wonderfully," she said, and though she was smiling, there were tears in her eyes. "I fully expected to take Nora back to New York on Wednesday's boat, and now here I am engaged to stay here for the next three weeks, and write up the society events of Bermuda. The manager tells me that the reporter who has been here all winter left last week, and he is really in need of some one to take her place, but if you and Mr. Crawford hadn't —"

Mrs. O'Neil got no farther, for Nora's arms were round her neck, and Kathleen was executing a war dance about the room.

"It's the loveliest thing that ever happened," cried Nora, rapturously. "Bermuda is such a beautiful place, and, oh, won't we have good times here all together?"

"I knew Daddy would be able to manage it in some way," said Kathleen, pausing in her war dance to hug her mother and sister. "All I ever have to do is just to suggest something, and he does all the rest."

CHAPTER XVI

KATHLEEN HAS HER WAY

THE little Bermuda steamer was rapidly making her way towards New York.

Already the New Jersey shore was in sight, and in another hour Sandy Hook would be reached. The voyage had been unusually smooth; few of the passengers had suffered from seasickness, and almost every one was on deck, watching the approach to land. It was a lovely Spring morning and from their deck chairs the twins were endeavoring to recognize familiar landmarks.

"I'm sure that must be Asbury Park," Nora declared. "Mummy and I spent a week there one summer, and that big building looks like the auditorium."

"I've never stayed at Asbury Park," said Kathleen, "but I've motored there from Monmouth, when I visited Sylvia Seymour. I like Bar Harbor better than New Jersey, though, don't you?"

"I've never seen Bar Harbor," laughed Nora. "You keep forgetting that I haven't traveled as you have."

"I know I do, but it seems so queer you shouldn't know all the places I know. We spent two summers at Bar Harbor before Daddy bought the camp at Big Moose. Are you glad we're going home, Nora?"

Nora hesitated.

"I'm afraid not quite as glad as I ought to be," she admitted. "I love home, of course, and it will be nice to see the Judsons, and all my other friends, but it was so beautiful in Bermuda, and we did have such good times."

"We certainly did," agreed Kathleen; "I don't think I ever enjoyed myself anywhere quite so much. But we couldn't have stayed much longer, because it was getting so hot, and the hotels were going to close. You'll like Big Moose just as much; see if you don't."

"I should love to see the mountains," said Nora, thoughtfully, "but perhaps Mummy won't let me go away again this summer. You see, this trip has cost a good deal, even though Mummy did pay most of her expenses by writing for the papers."

Kathleen smiled a superior smile.

"If you think for one minute," she said decidedly, "that you and Mother are not coming to spend the summer with us at Big Moose, you are very much mistaken. Because if you don't come with us I sha'n't go either."

Nora looked very much surprised, but three weeks' acquaintance with her twin sister had convinced her of the fact that Kathleen had a way of carrying her points, and surmounting seemingly unsurmountable difficulties, that in any one else would have seemed quite beyond belief. She was very fond of Kathleen, and had a great admiration for her accomplishments, but there were moments when her faith in the power of her sister's achievements was not unmixed with awe.

"I am afraid Mummy won't come, even if she should let me go for a visit," she said, doubtfully. "She told me last night that she wouldn't be able to take another vacation for ever so long."

"Well, if she stays in New York all summer I shall stay, too," said Kathleen, calmly. "I didn't have any mother for years and years, and now that I've got one I don't intend to give her up again. I'm not going to leave you either, Nora ; I shouldn't think you'd want me to."

"I don't," said Nora ; "I should miss you dreadfully, but then there's your daddy ; you wouldn't like to keep him in the city all summer, would you ?"

Kathleen looked a little troubled.

"I don't believe he would mind very much," she said, "especially if Mother were there. Daddy and Mother are great friends, you know. I asked him yesterday if he didn't think Mother was the

prettiest lady he had ever seen, and he said, 'I do indeed.' I wish you could have seen the way he looked when he said it. I heard him talking to Aunt Kitty the day before we left Bermuda, and he said he could never forgive himself when he thought of all Mother had suffered, because of that old paper, and not being allowed to see me. Aunty Kitty loves Mother, too. She called her a dear, brave little woman, and Daddy looked so pleased."

"I wish Father hadn't died," said Nora, with a sigh. "I never realized how nice fathers were till I knew Mr. Crawford."

"Why do you keep calling Daddy Mr. Crawford?" said Kathleen, impatiently. "It sounds so silly and formal. I don't see why you can't call him Daddy, just as I do. He's very fond of you."

"I don't see how he can be fond of me," said Nora, blushing, "when he thinks of all the trouble I gave him that first week. I didn't suppose he would ever forgive me for pretending to be you."

"Well, he's very fond of you, anyhow," maintained Kathleen, "and he's perfectly crazy about Mother. Do you think she likes him?"

"Oh, I'm sure she does. She's so grateful to him, you know."

"I don't think being grateful and being fond of a person are quite the same thing," said Kathleen, doubtfully. "They were talking for a long

time in the moonlight last night. I heard their voices after I was in bed. Daddy can always make people do what he wants them to."

"I don't believe anybody in the world could persuade Mummy to do a thing she thought was wrong," said Nora, with conviction.

"My daddy wouldn't ask her to do anything wrong," returned Kathleen, indignantly. "How could it be wrong for you and Mother to spend the summer with us at Big Moose?"

Nora was puzzled.

"I don't suppose it would be exactly wrong," she said, "but Mummy might think it was. You see she is very proud, and she just hates to accept favors from people who aren't relations."

"But Daddy is a relation," objected Kathleen, "at least I should think he might be. Being adopted makes things rather mixed up, doesn't it? Well, I never knew Daddy to fail when he'd once made up his mind to a thing, and he's promised me I shall never be separated from Mother again. Oh, see how near the shore looks. I'm going to ask Uncle Stephen to let me look through his glasses."

Kathleen departed, in quest of Mr. Carew and his opera-glass, but Nora did not move. She sat gazing out at the dark blue sea, and there was a troubled expression in her eyes. It was all very pleasant for Kathleen to be so sure about things.

Kathleen had only known Mummy a month, but she had known her for twelve years, and she did not feel at all certain that things would be arranged as easily and comfortably as her twin seemed to think. The past three weeks had been very delightful. Somehow the prospect of a return to life in the studio did not strike her as quite so alluring as it had done in those first days in Bermuda.

"I shall have to study very hard," she told herself; "I've missed nearly a whole month of school. It will be fun to see the girls again, and I shall go to see Kathleen sometimes on Saturdays and Sundays, but it won't be the same thing as living in the house with her, and doing everything together." And Nora heaved a deep sigh, for she had grown to love her twin sister very dearly.

"Hello, Nora!"

At the sound of the familiar voice, Nora turned with a start, to find Reggie Starr standing by her chair. The Campbells and their aunt and uncle had left Bermuda a week earlier, but Mrs. Starr had not been well, and so Reggie and his parents had remained longer than had originally been intended, and were now on their way back to New York.

"What are you looking so solemn about?" Reggie inquired, seating himself in the deck-chair Kathleen had just vacated.

Nora laughed and blushed.

"Was I looking solemn?" she said. "I didn't know it. I was only thinking what a pity it was that nice things have to come to an end."

"It has been nice, hasn't it?" said Reggie, reflectively. "I shall have to work hard, though, to make up for all the weeks I've lost. Just think, I've missed three Saturdays, and our school plays every Saturday afternoon. I wouldn't mind so much about just missing school. Don't you hate it?"

"Oh, no, I rather like school, but this has been such a wonderful vacation, I'm afraid it's going to be hard to settle down right away. I shall miss Kathleen terribly, too. I suppose twins are always just a little fonder of each other than ordinary sisters."

"Won't you live with Kathleen?" inquired Reggie, in surprise.

"Kathleen thinks it can be arranged, but I'm quite sure it can't. You see, she doesn't know Mummy as well as I do. Mummy is very proud. She hates accepting favors from people, and if we went to live at the Crawfords it would be a very great favor, of course, for Mr. Crawford would never let us pay board."

"But he's so rich, and he's got such a big house," objected Reggie. "I shouldn't think it would make any difference if two more people

lived there. I've never been inside, but I've passed it often."

"The size doesn't make any difference," said Nora. "Mummy wouldn't live in a king's palace unless she could do something to pay for her board. O dear! I almost wish Mr. Crawford were poor. Then perhaps we could all live together, and Mummy could pay our share of the expenses."

Reggie reflected for a moment in silence; then he said slowly :

"Mother seems to think there's a way, and so does Father. They were talking about it this morning."

"What did they say?" demanded Nora, eagerly.

"Why, your mother and Mr. Crawford were walking up and down, and when they passed our chairs Mother said, 'How pretty she looks this morning,' and Father laughed, and said, 'Lucky little woman; I fancy her working days are over.' Then Mother said, 'Well, I'm sure she deserves a little happiness, and I don't believe the Carews will object.' Then I think they must have noticed that I was listening, for Father said something about the Jersey Coast, and Mother wondered what time we should get in."

Nora was deeply interested, and a little uncomfortable as well.

"I can't think what they meant," she said. "Of course Mummy is awfully happy about being able to see Kathleen, but that hasn't anything to do with her working days being over. I'm sure she would never give up working unless she were ill. Oh," with sudden anxiety, "you don't think they meant Mummy was ill, do you?"

Reggie shook his head decidedly.

"Not a bit of it," he said. "Father wouldn't have laughed and called her a lucky little woman in that case. I'd go and ask what they did mean, only I don't believe they'd tell me."

Nora rose. She was looking unusually serious.

"I think I'll go and see if I can help Mummy," she said. "She went in to pack ever so long ago."

"Well, don't stay long," warned Reggie. "Father says we're nearly at Sandy Hook, and it'll be fun going up the bay."

Mrs. O'Neil was in her cabin, but she was not packing. She was sitting on the sofa, gazing straight before her, with hands folded idly in her lap. It was such an unusual position for the busy little mother, that Nora was conscious of a sudden pang of fear. Could Mummy really be ill, after all?

"Is there anything the matter, Mummy dear?" she inquired anxiously, hurrying to her mother's side.

Mrs. O'Neil looked up with a start.

"Why, no, darling," she said, cheerfully; "I was resting for a few minutes, that is all. The packing is finished, and I had nothing else to do. Where's Kathleen?"

"She went to look through Mr. Carew's spy-glass. I came to see if I could help you pack. Oh, Mummy, there is something the matter. You've been crying."

"Nonsense, pussy, what should I cry about? That little imagination of yours is altogether too vivid."

But though she tried to laugh, Mrs. O'Neil's voice trembled a little, and Nora was not satisfied. With a sudden loving impulse, she dropped on her knees and laid her head in her mother's lap.

"It's sort of nice to be going home, isn't it, Mummy?" she said softly. "It's all right for you and me, because we've got each other, the same as we always had, but it's just a little hard for Kathleen and Mr. Crawford."

"No, no, darling, it isn't hard for Kathleen," said Mrs. O'Neil, sadly. "Kathleen has everything in the world to make her happy."

"She hasn't got you," said Nora. "Mr. Crawford's very nice, of course, and Kathleen loves him dearly, but a gentleman isn't nearly as much company in a house as a lady. Besides, he's away at his office all day, and, oh, Mummy, if you could see that housekeeper! She's so stiff

and prim ; I don't believe she ever saw a joke in her life. Kathleen wants us all to live together ; she thinks her daddy can arrange it, but I'm quite sure he can't."

Before Mrs. O'Neil could answer, the door was suddenly burst open, and Kathleen, flushed and panting, appeared on the threshold.

"Mother," she began, without a moment's hesitation, "why have you made my daddy unhappy ? "

"Oh, hush, darling, don't talk so loud. Please close the door." Mrs. O'Neil's cheeks were crimson, and her lips twitched nervously, but she was evidently making a great effort to appear as usual.

Kathleen closed the door, and advanced into the middle of the cabin, where she stood regarding her mother and sister with flashing eyes. But before she could speak again, Nora had scrambled to her feet, and was beginning an indignant protest.

"You mustn't speak like that to Mummy," she said, sternly. "Mummy never made any one unhappy in her life."

"She has made my daddy very unhappy," maintained Kathleen. "I could see the unhappiness in his eyes."

"Sit down, Kathleen," said her mother gently. "You mustn't quarrel, children. Now, Kathleen,

tell me quietly, what has your—what has Mr. Crawford been saying to you?"

"He didn't say much, but I could see how unhappy he was. I asked him to arrange things so you and Nora could live with us, and he said he had tried very hard, but he was afraid it wasn't to be. And then he gave such a long sigh, and the dreadfully unhappy look came into his eyes. I never saw my daddy like that before." And Kathleen's voice broke in a sob.

"I won't have my daddy made unhappy; I won't! I won't!" she cried, passionately. "He's the best man in the world, and people always do what he wants them to. You've got to tell him you're sorry, Mother—oh, please, please tell him you're sorry."

But Mrs. O'Neil did not answer. She had put both hands before her face, and was crying softly. Nora's arms were round her in a moment.

"Now you've gone and made Mummy unhappy," she cried, reproachfully. "Never mind what she says, Mummy darling; we've got each other, and you sha'n't be made to go and live anywhere you don't want to. Oh, Kathleen, please go and ask your daddy to come here, and tell Mummy she needn't do anything she doesn't want to."

"No, no," gasped Mrs. O'Neil, "she mustn't—" But Kathleen had already departed.

In less than five minutes she was back again holding Mr. Crawford's hand, and fairly dragging him along with her. Mrs. O'Neil's face was still hidden in her hands, and Nora was bending over her.

"Here's Daddy, Mother," Kathleen announced breathlessly. "He's come to tell you not to cry any more. He says you are free to do just as you like, didn't you, Daddy?"

Then Mr. Crawford came forward, and laid his hand gently on Mrs. O'Neil's shoulder.

"Is it so very hard, Eleanor, my dear?" he said, and his voice was not quite steady.

Mrs. O'Neil gave a violent start, and lifted her face from her hands. Both twins uttered a simultaneous exclamation of astonishment, for their mother was not crying, but smiling, and there was a look in her eyes which even Nora had never seen in them before.

"It isn't hard at all, Duncan," she answered, holding out her hand to Mr. Crawford. "The only trouble is I'm—I'm rather afraid it's too easy."

"Why," gasped Kathleen in amazement, "you aren't either of you unhappy. Whatever made you cry so, Mother?"

Mrs. O'Neil laughed and blushed, and Nora felt sure her mother had never looked quite so pretty before.

"I think it was because I am so happy," she said. "Did you never hear of people crying for joy?" And then she opened her arms, and gathered both twins into them.

It was an hour later, and the little steamer was slowly making her way into her pier. Most of the passengers were on deck, waiting for the gangplank to be lowered, when Reggie Starr, having separated himself from his father and mother, came hurriedly pushing his way through the crowd, in search of his friends.

"Here we are, Reggie," called a familiar voice, and Nora, radiant of face, sparkling of eye, made frantic gestures to indicate her whereabouts.

"I've only got a minute," panted Reggie. "Mother'll have a fit if she doesn't see me when they put out the plank, but I just had to come and tell you I've found out what they meant."

"So have I," said Nora. "Oh, Reggie, it's the most beautiful thing that ever happened. It's all settled. Mummy and Mr. Crawford are going to get married, and Kathleen's daddy will be my daddy, too!"

THE END

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Rhoades, Nina.
Nora's twin Sister,

